

**A RETROSPECTIVE STUDY OF ADOLESCENT
STUDENT RESILIENCE WITHIN
SOVIET AND POST-SOVIET EDUCATIONAL CHANGE**

A Thesis

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by

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of adolescent student experience within the context of social, political and economic change. It examines the retrospective meaning five post-Soviet individuals made of their school-based, familial and social experiences prior to and following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The study employs a framework based upon student resilience and success.

This study reviews literature within four areas of focus. First, it examines the nature of change, and operationally divides change into two rudimentary subsets: drawn change (that which slowly alters a societal path over long period of time) and moment change (that which is often linked to crisis and dynamically redirects a societal path over a very short period of time). A discussion of literature follows that examines the historical occurrence of education within the context of social and political change, wherein social and political links are drawn to education. Third, the material available on the subjects of resilience and success is reviewed, from which a model of resilience is employed as a piece of the conceptual framework. The union of the models of change and resilience is then discussed. The fourth area of literature-based focus constructs the historical, cultural, social, political and economic context from which the participants in this study (and their early educational experience) came.

Following the review of literature, a description of the methodology and epistemology held by the researcher is presented. Constructivism within hermeneutic phenomenology is discussed at length, followed by an account of the researcher's position, and then a detailed explanation of the qualitative research design.

The participants selected were former adolescent students within the Soviet education system both prior to and after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. All participants were residents of Canada at the time of study. One female and four male individuals participated within one-on-one semi-structured conversational interviews. In four cases, secondary questioning (or *member checking*) took place through the use of in-person or electronic mail communication. Data from all interviews were transcribed and analysed with specialized computer software.

Each participant described in depth his or her school-, familial- and social-based experiences both prior to, during and after the changes that took place within the Soviet Union (perestroika, glasnost' and the dissolution of the Soviet Union). Also discussed was their understanding of success and resilience, described within the context of their own experience. Five themes appeared to emerge. Participants described their experience as one where the structures and values within their families did not change at any point within the broader social, political and economic changes. Second, they relied upon their past experience and examples surrounding them to make behavioural decisions during the time of the change. Third, they described tacit understanding of locus of control and were thus less affected by changes beyond their control. Fourth, each described levels of stability within their immediate (familial and school-based) experience. Fifth, at the broader societal level of experience, a generally optimistic ethos existed that over shadowed the similarly present air of fear and disorder. Participant experience provided a basis for the reconceptualization of the theoretical framework, and specifically the resiliency model wherein protective factors were divided into key areas: past personal experience, immediate personal experience and broader social experience.

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DEDICATION

To my wife Jennifer—without whom I would be lost.

To my mother and father—without whom I would not be who I am.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Modern society and community exist in an ever-increasing state of change. The effects of change in one area broaden to encompass a larger depth of society. As a result, education is at times a tool for change, pushing emerging generations toward a new goal or value system. At other times, education appears as an unprepared or ill-equipped pawn in the grips of larger social and political crisis. Ultimately, both the emerging complexity of change and the link of change to education prove difficult to escape.

Links between society and education are illustrated by Gozdz (1995) when he notes that...

...[c]ommunity, which is comprised of multiple levels of systems, always acts interdependently. Each level, while a whole system in itself, is also a part of a more comprehensive whole. For example, the individual self is a whole, and simultaneously part of the learning organization. The self and the organization are parts of a larger whole: society. (p. 66)

Similarly, Dewey (1935) explains the nature of this association as an “education system that corresponds to the spirit, the temper, the dominant habits and purposes that hold the people of the country together. ... A national system is an outgrowth from the people” (p. 357). Simply put, an education system is a construct of society. It is therefore subject to society’s ebbs and flows and is firmly connected to change that affects society *en masse*.

A great deal of literature has been written to discuss the nature of change within education from an *instigative* viewpoint (Anderson, 1993; Evans, 1993; Holzman, 1993; Wagner, 1993). These writings encompass contexts where bureaucracies, departments of

government, boards of directors, schools or *grassroots* levels have recognized an issue as problematic and have sought to rectify it. In some of these cases, the change resulting from administration-directed correction or adaptation is very large in scope and permeates the whole system—affecting and perhaps disrupting student participation. Pervasive changes of this nature are often referred to as *systemic changes* or *reform* and are not the focus of this study.

Change, in fact, may be understood in other ways. Little has been written about the nature of educational change within the context of unexpected and all-encompassing social and political crisis. Even less has been written from the perspective of students—specifically, how students view the impact of change upon their own lives, well-being, success and future.

Some discussions of change draw a link between unexpected change and the notion of crisis. As Conner (1993) suggests, “crisis ensues because ambiguity enters the situation” (p. 28). In other words, as individuals or society experience crisis they are challenged by a change that either seems unpredictable or for which they are un- or ill-prepared. “[W]e feel most vulnerable to change when we are surprised that we are surprised” (Conner, 1993, p. 71). This vulnerability is a personal experience directly related to change in its most catastrophic form.

How do change and crises affect the student, and how do schools develop coping strategies (commonly referred to as *resilience*) among student populations, protecting them from the damaging influences of change and crisis? How do students understand crisis and adapt in response to it? Do schools present change and crisis in a controlled manner, or are students left on their own to defend themselves against the consequences?

Questions of this nature require study, and the unprecedented social and political change found at the end of the Soviet experience provides a case in point.

In the wake of crisis and social and political change in the Soviet Union circa 1991, students' lives and experiences, which Bronfenbrenner (1980) calls their *ecological system*, seemed to adapt to change and crisis in ways that empowered growth and success despite their surroundings (Bosworth & Earthman, 2002; Flach, 1988; Richardson, 2002; Richardson, Neiger, Jensen, & Kumpfer, 1990; Rutter, 1999). From where does this resilience stem?

The Researcher

Though a more detailed account of philosophical position is presented in Chapter Three, it is appropriate to provide the reader with an introduction to the researcher early within this study. I came into the field of Educational Administration by way of the Departments of Political Studies and International Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, wherein I completed a four-year honours Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Studies (with a specialization in International Relations), combined with an Honours Arts Program in International Studies. This background, appropriately for the nature of this study, is augmented by advanced undergraduate research in post-Soviet social, political and economic transition at the State University of Chernivtsi, in Chernivtsi, Ukraine, and course work in both the Russian and Ukrainian languages.

I am, though not born in the Soviet Union, of the same generation as the students who were participants within this study, and I believe that this, combined with my general and specific knowledge of the historical and cultural setting from which the

participants hail, enabled me to provide a comfortable environment in which research interviews were conducted. Further to this point, I have some background in conducting qualitative interviews, through my participation within other studies employing similar methods.

Statement of Purpose

This is a study of adolescent student experiences within the context of social, political and economic change. It provides a retrospective collection of student experiences (school-based, familial and social) during the final years of the Soviet Union, and after its collapse. The study employed a framework based upon student resilience and success as it sought to better understand students' responses to change.

Primary and Secondary Research Questions

In addressing issues raised within the statement of purpose, the question of this study is as follows:

- What meaning do students make of their experiences in school during and after the Soviet-era?

As a collection of lenses through which the nature of these experiences were examined, the following areas of focus were employed.

- How do students understand the all-encompassing *change* that surrounded them during the perestroika and glasnost' period, as well as during the collapse of the Soviet Union and its aftermath?
- How have students' ideas of *success* changed within these periods?

- What meaning do students make of *resilience*, and how does their understanding of resilience relate to their own experiences?

Significance

The significance of this study is found in its ability to inform pedagogical communities of students' responses to crisis and all-encompassing change. Such information may empower teachers, principals, administrators and parents to develop resilience within student populations and ultimately assist in the development of adaptation skills, and skills related to success.

This study can also enfranchise former-Soviet youth with a 'voice,' something perceived by some as having been withheld by their schools at the time: "educators are failing to teach students even to formulate, much less express, their own opinions with respect to the most urgent problems of the reality around them" (Krasovitskii, 1992, p. 79). As well, the study is historically significant, providing the historical record with individual participants' perspectives while they were developing formative adolescent perceptions of society, politics, citizenship, education and social and power relationships.

Significance may also be found in this study surrounding the generally understood communication gaps between students and teachers. This point has been highlighted by Fullan (1991) who "found that students [do] not think that teachers under[stand] them ... [or] their point of view" (p. 173). The generational separation of teacher and student that is present in western education may be miniscule in comparison with that found between teachers educated within the old Soviet system and the students that Van Hoorn, Komlósi, Suchar and Samelson (2000) have called the *Omega-Alpha generation*. These

are adolescents whose lives straddle the old and the new systems, and to whom Kutsev referred as the *bewildered generation* — those “disillusioned with the ideas of socialism, assuming that their elders are bureaucrats, Stalinists, and conservatives” and faced with mounting unemployment, economic deterioration and criminal activity (USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1992, p. 7).

A study of this nature adds to the clarity required by policy-makers in their understanding of how school systems may better respond to students’ needs in times of change and crisis. This study likewise expands the knowledge base from which leaders may more accurately view an often forgotten manifestation of change in the context of education. Finally, this study adds to the distinctively thin historical record as it pertains to the life of children and adolescents in general (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2002).

Research Context

Some important contextual issues deserve clarification within this study. Each participant was able and willing to recall the nature of broad societal change and crisis, and his or her experiences within it. Similarly, the participants’ retrospective ability to recall change suggests that perceptions of change and crisis existed in their minds as adolescent students. Nothing within the dialogue suggested that the participants were dishonest or obstructive in their responses to questions. Each appeared able to articulate his or her responses accurately in English, although their first language was Russian or Ukrainian.

Participants within this study were between the ages of twelve and sixteen years in 1991, and attended school within the Soviet education system before and after that time. In other words, they were adolescent students at the time of all-encompassing social and political change within the Soviet Union. This study is delimited to eliciting these individuals' perceptions of resilience and success in the context of their educational experience within the broader environment of social and political change. Participants' perceptions of their experience between 1986 and 1992 provide the focal period of this study.

This is a study of a certain type of change and its effects on—and the responses of—individual adolescent participants within their educational systems. This is not a study of *instigative* change (outlined earlier), nor is it a study of innovation within schools.

It may be reasonable to presume that each participant within this study arrived in Canada as a result of either privilege or luck—this emerged from the dialogue. For three of the participants (Dmytro, Viktoriya and Ihor), their departure was as a result of familial connection to Canada and/or participation in Canadian academic programs. For one (Oleksandr), an opportunity to leave his home came by way of his participation and ability in hockey. For another (Lev), his nuclear family left Russia for reasons of parents' employment—the participant had no choice in the matter.

Since departing from their respective homes, Dmytro, Viktoriya and Ihor have pursued graduate level degrees. Oleksandr has completed an undergraduate degree and is gainfully employed within a non-academic department in a Canadian university. Lev began an undergraduate degree, but had not yet completed it. Similar to Oleksandr, he

was employed at a Canadian university. Viktoriya, Ihor and Lev were married and had already begun families of their own at the time of study; Dmytro was engaged. Ihor's wife remained in Ukraine while he attended school in Canada; Dmytro's fiancée did likewise.

Definitions

To clarify certain notions, connotations and language used within this study, the following definitions of terms were utilized:

Change

For the purposes of this study, weight is given to the thought that change is a *process* and not a singular event or moment in time—akin to Conner's (1993) notions that change is distinguished from *crisis*, which may present itself as an individual event and may be an antecedent, catalyst, or pinnacle of change.

To disregard the process of change that may take place within a moment in time, however, would be an overstepping of this definition. In the chapter that follows, the researcher derives a model of change from numerous sources in anticipation of drawing links to resilience and success. In this light, change is better understood as expressed by two subsets: *drawn change* and *moment change*.

Drawn Change

Drawn change denotes a process of change spanning great periods of time—in some cases years, decades or even centuries. It is understood as a gradual deviation from

an initial *status quo* or demarcated societal path. This type of change can find its roots in *instigative* action, described earlier as that which is planned or exists to fulfil a specific end or rectify a specific problem. It can also arise spontaneously (though gradually) as the result of natural societal, political, economic and historical pressures too intertwined and numerous to be specified within an exact ætiology (see *Figure 1*).

Moment Change

Moment change is a change process resulting from specific pressure or pressures causing a direct and distinct change of societal path (see *Figure 2*). As with drawn change, such a change or crisis can take place spontaneously (over a very short period of time) or as a result of *instigative* action.

Perestroika

From the Russian, the term perestroika may be deconstructed as follows: *nepe* [pere-] means *over*; *строить* [stroit'] means *to build*, thus, *to rebuild*. Perestroika was the policy designed by Mikhail Gorbachev intended to rebuild socialism (not to mention the Soviet economy) after eighteen years of economic and social stagnation in the Soviet Union under Leonid Brezhnev (Gorbachev, 1986, 1988, 1989). Combined with Gorbachev's concept of *glasnost'*, or openness, a closed and opaque state *slowly* released its handle on power (Brodinsky, 1992; Kaufman, 1994; Morgan, 1991; Nikandrov, 1995; Reilly, 1996; Shlapentokh, 1990; Yeltsin, 1987).

Glasnost'

Again from the Russian, гласность [glasnost'] refers to Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of openness within Soviet society. It was seen as a necessary precursor to the success of perestroika—as only through an open and free re-examination of the history of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party and the Soviet economy and society could perestroika's goals for economic revitalization and the democratization of all aspects of society take place (19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU, 1988a, 1988b, 1988c, 1988d; Barmenkov, 1983; Filippov, 1989; Gorbachev, 1986, 1988, 1989; Kaufman, 1994; Morgan, 1991; Nikandrov, 1995; Reilly, 1996; "Resolution of the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the political report of the CPSU Central Committee," 1986; Rogachev, 1992; USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1992; Yagodin, 1989; Yakovlev, 1988; Zajda, 1994).

Crisis

For the purposes of this study, crisis is seen from Conner's (1993) perspective. According to Conner (1993), a *crisis*, which may present itself as an individual event, may be an antecedent, catalyst, or pinnacle of change (and most often of moment change). In the context of its employment within this thesis, crisis refers directly to the events of August 18-22, 1991, where key members of the Soviet establishment placed Mikhail Gorbachev under house arrest and established the State Committee for the State of Emergency to oversee the reigning-in of perestroika-based reforms—known also as the *August coup*. This event resulted in the implosion of the Soviet Union and a change

in the Soviet societal path (Massey, 1991; Nikandrov, 1995; Rudnev & Yakov, 1993; Slater, 1993).

Student

For the purposes of this study, unless otherwise noted as different, the term *student* represents those adolescent members of Soviet secondary schools between the ages of twelve and sixteen in 1991, and who attended school within the Soviet education system before and after that time.

Participant

The term *participant* represents those students who participate within this study.

Resilience

Of key importance within this study is the notion that resilience allows individuals to succeed within society, their community, group, and, in the case of students, their school, by preparing them for the effects of change (Conner, 1993; Fullan, 2001).

Success

For the purposes of this study, success has been operationally defined as the achievement of personal goals, whatever their context or individual significance.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is a work in five chapters. In the first chapter, pertinent background, purpose and research questions are introduced and described. Chapter Two details a review of significant literature related to the concepts outlined in Chapter One. Further from this literature, a contextual framework for this study is established. In Chapter Three, a research design, methodology and method are presented. Chapter Four portrays the data as collected in accordance with methods discussed in the third chapter. Finally, Chapter Five offers an analysis and discussion of data presented in the fourth chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature and Conceptual Framework

This is a study of adolescent student experiences within the context of social, political and economic change. It provides a retrospective collection of student experiences (school-based, familial and social) during the final years of the Soviet Union, and after its collapse. The study employs a framework based upon student resilience and success as it seeks to better understand students' responses to change.

This chapter begins by presenting a traditional review of relevant literature concerning the key concept of change. Both general and specific views of the educational context of change are offered, as well as views related to the experiences of students. Subsequently, this thesis continues with a review of material related to the topics of resilience and resiliency theory. Combining the examination of change and resilience, the researcher establishes a theoretical framework of *resiliency within change*, which comprises the key elements of the study.

In the final pages of this chapter, the Soviet educational context is presented through a discussion of literature pertaining to its roots and strict adherence to the tenets of Marxist-Leninist thought, and the effect of such adherence on the development of Soviet society between 1917 and 1986. Details of economic factors pertaining to the instigative force for change, known as perestroika, likewise is reviewed and related to the significance of glasnost'. Finally, education is described within the contexts of perestroika, glasnost' and the events that caused and followed the disintegration of the Soviet political, economic and social system in 1991.

Change

To define change is not a simple task. A basic conceptualization requires an abstraction of historical “components.” The first of these components is what anthropologists and archaeologists have called *traits*, which may be more easily understood as *patterns* of events or *units* of existence—*configurations* or *constellations*, to borrow terms from historians and sociologists (Smith, 1976). Patterns and units comprise the links in the chain of history. As such links are interrelated in a variety of ways and stem from a variety of origins, a spatial model begins to emerge. The significance, however, arrives in the second and perhaps more obvious component: *time*. Dynamically, with the passage of time, patterns find expression in *motion* (the combination of *patterns* over *time*).

Events constitute the fourth historical component. As Smith (1976) suggested, “change always involves some reference to events, some turning-points or occurrences which mark a point of transition” (p. 11). Finally, *difference* emerges. “Change is not change until the motion of patterns in time and space has resulted in another pattern or ... another form for that pattern” (p. 11). Therefore, Smith suggested that change constitutes “a succession of events which [sic] produce over time a modification or replacement of particular patterns or units by other novel ones” (Smith, 1976, p. 11, emphasis in original).

An analysis of an event, moment in time, process or context is an extremely significant tool in the search for insight into relationships, actions, abilities, emotions, feelings and opinions. Every event, moment, process and context holds within itself the effects of the past, the situation of the present and the potential of the future (Dellow,

1998). It is the construction of meaning within the analysis of these happenings that drives the basis of this study: the relationships between events, moments, processes and contexts that provide a framework for the notions of change (Moore, 1963). It is the actions, emotions, feelings and opinions of individuals within these relationships that yields substance, and it is the abilities of these individuals which prepare them for or disadvantage them within the diverse, challenging and disruptive events, moments, processes and contexts of the future (Richardson, 2002). Change is the difference experienced as a result; it is “viewed in relation to the particular values, goals, and outcomes it serves” (Fullan, 1991, p. 8).

A full and complete understanding of change was the unproductive pursuit of early sociologists (Böröcz, 1997; Fullan, 2000; Moore, 1963), failing under the “combined onslaught of logical analysis and opposing facts, and ... [being] based on false premises and analogies” (Moore, 1963, p. 24). The root failure of what Moore (1963) called a *singular theory of change*, and Fullan (2000) echoed as a *definitive theory of change*, is the absence of a singular control agent “account[able] for each and every change in the characteristics of patterned action” (Moore, 1963, pp. 23-24). Fullan concurred that his

...most profound observation is that there never will be a definitive theory of change. It is a theoretical and empirical impossibility to generate a theory that applies to all situations. Definitive theories of change are unknowable because they do not and cannot exist. Theories of change can guide thinking and action, ...but the reality of complexity tells us that each situation will have a degree of

uniqueness in its history and makeup which [*sic*] will cause unpredictable differences to emerge. (Fullan, 2000, p. 21)

This is not to say that models of change are useless or irrelevant. Rather, they enable us to better understand particular aspects of the change process. In fact, Fullan (2000), who is supported by his earlier work in 1991 and the work of others such as Stacey in 1992 and Moore in 1963, stated that “it is the task of change theorists and practitioners to accumulate their wisdom and experience about how the change process works. Sometimes this will be model-specific insights of change” (Fullan, 2000, p. 21). The need for such models is underscored by Fullan’s further commentary in 2001 and 1993 that “[u]nderstanding the change process is exceedingly elusive” (Fullan, 2001, p. 5) as it is “uncontrollably complex, and in many circumstances ‘unknowable’” (Fullan, 1993, p. 19). For the purposes of this study, a simplified picture of change is constructed based on temporal and magnitude characteristics in order to better understand its relationship with resilience.

Drawn Change

Change that occurs within a process or context may move very slowly or be drawn out over many years, decades or, in the case of society, centuries (Conner, 1993; Fullan, 1991). Change of this nature can be lost in the passage of time. One does not really understand that they themselves have changed, or that the world around them has changed (Whyte, 1974). In fact, such an ignorance of change may be understood in terms of Moore’s (1963) concept of *static predictability*: the idea that “[t]here appear to be

psychological limits to people's tolerance for chaos—and, incidentally, limits to their tolerance for endless repetition” (Moore, 1963, p. 6). Drawn change is a gradual difference in relationships of individuals, groups, communities and societies. Fullan's (2000) discussion of *evolutionary theory* seems to parallel this concept of a change that spans time. Similarly, his statement in 1991 that “[o]ne does not need to be a historian to accept the fact that a number of major external and internal forces over time create pressure for change” (Fullan, 1991, p. 17) followed a notion that deviation from a demarcated societal path over time is not only accepted as a fact of social development, but also outlines the important role shared by individuals, groups, and communities in the change process within their societies. Pressure for change can be understood as both *tacit* and *instigative*, and was keenly summarized by Smith (1976) in his discussion of active and passive change.

For Smith, the division of change related fundamentally to “the two modes of the verb, to change, the transitive and intransitive” (Smith, 1976, p. 23). He argued that the intransitive is understood “where modes of production, institutions, empires and nations, even civilisations, are held to change, as it were of their own accord” (p. 23). In other words, we as participants in change have no specific or far-reaching affect on the change. But Smith also argued that change surfaces in a way parallel to the transitive mode—where it is expressed as “the outcome of human plans and intentions” (1976, pp. 24-25). As examples of such change, he cited “a regime implementing reforms in local government taxation, synods adopting a new liturgy and ritual, or businessmen introducing new sales policies” (Smith, 1976, p. 25). Building on the framework provided by Smith (1976) regarding intransitive change, *tacit pressures for change* were

the natural development of relationships among individuals and groups: “how humans evolve over time, especially in relation to interaction and cooperative behavior”—how we as participants in society attempt to cooperate and improve our situation, or collectively develop our individual selfish interests and ensure our demise (Fullan, 2000, p. 6).

Harper (1989) discussed at length the tacit pressures for change, which he called *trends*. In fact, he developed his understanding of trends into two subsets: *structural trends* and *cultural trends*. Structural trends are “the persistent relationships between people, from the smallest and most intimate to the largest and most abstract” (Harper, 1989, p. 13). In other words, as we engage in relationships with others throughout our life, we slowly and unknowingly adapt along the social structure that surrounds us. A cultural trend “is the blueprint for living that people share. It includes symbols, knowledge and beliefs, values (what is good and bad), norms (how people are expected to behave), and technologies (the techniques by which people deal with the material world)” (Harper, 1989, p. 13). In this case, as these commonly- or societal-held beliefs adapt over time, so too do our personal beliefs, though we may not recognize the adaptation or change process.

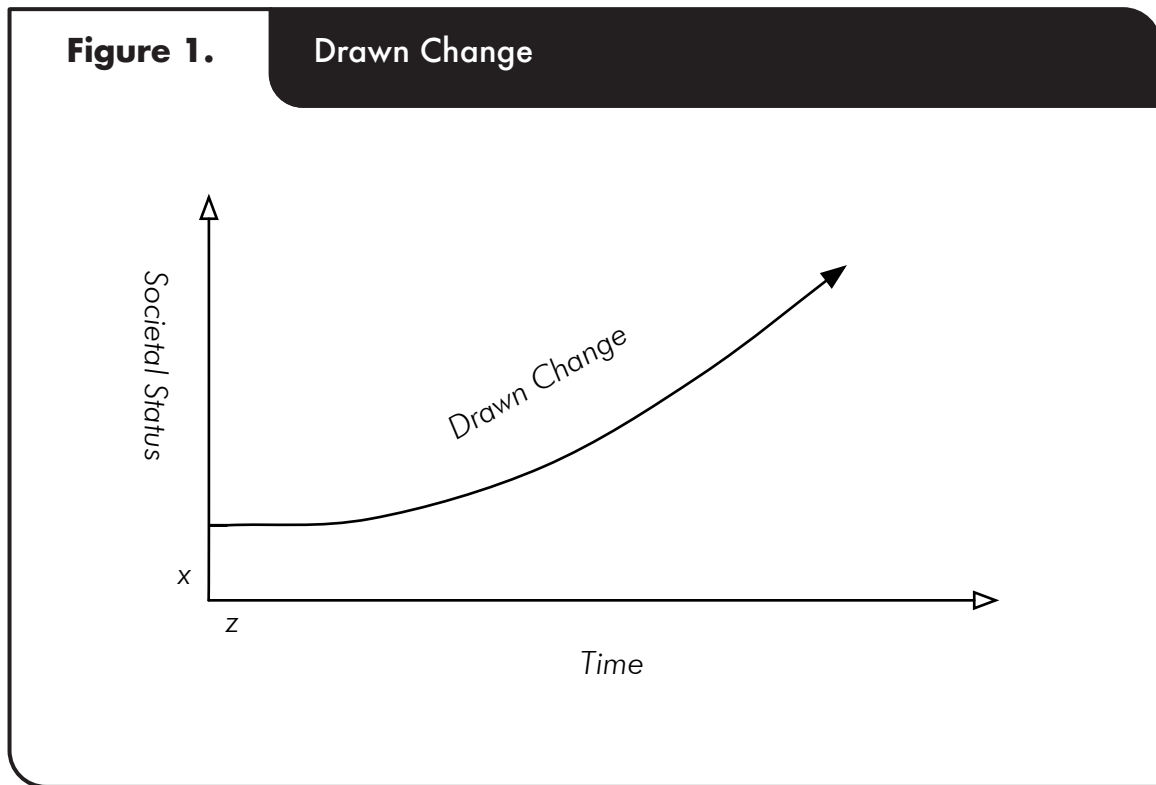
Looking to Smith’s (1976) definition of transitive change as a backdrop for discussion, *instigative pressures for change* imply a problem-solution situation within an aspect of society or individual relationships. The fact that a problem and/or solution has been identified does not necessarily mean that all participants within the group, community or society are eagerly willing to adjust their actions, emotions, feelings and opinions (Foster, 1962; Harper, 1989). Over time, individuals, groups, communities and

society may adhere to all or part of the solution, or may discount it outright. Either way, a change will occur.

Fullan (2001) perhaps best summarized drawn tacit and instigative pressures for change when he noted, “[l]iving systems cannot be *directed* along a linear path. Unforeseen consequences are inevitable. The challenge is to *disturb* them in a manner that approximates the desired outcome” (pp. 108-109). A model of drawn change proves enlightening as a component of the conceptual framework for this thesis.

A Model of Drawn Change

Consider *Figure 1*, a diagram representing the passage of time (along the z -axis) and societal (individual, group or community) status (along the x -axis). Over time, as the unforeseen consequences of tacit and instigative pressures come into effect, society’s path deviates from a static existence along the horizontal. A line originating from any point along the x -axis of societal status and travelling horizontally, parallel to the z -axis of time, represents the static existence or stasis in society. Any movement along the x -axis is purely relative to its previous position. There is never positive or negative correlation between the variables, merely degrees of movement away from a previous society *status quo* over time. Drawn change is a deviation of societal status over time, but does not imply that stasis could not conceivably occur at some later point; a gradual plateau in movement along the x -axis of social status represents such stasis, be it ever so brief. Likewise, society’s path may wander over time, causing the line representing drawn change to take on a wave-like appearance. In such cases, one may conclude that society revisits previously explored changes in a series of drawn changes.



Moment Change

As we accept the understanding that individuals, groups, communities and societies can change over prolonged periods of time, we must also understand that change is occasionally swift and drastic—*moment change*, to turn a phrase. A representation of such swift and drastic examples of change was explored in Moore’s (1963) notions of evolutionary stair-steps: “the idea of successive (and progressive) eras of man’s civilization, marked off by relatively sharp breaks between one era and another” (p. 35).

Stacey (1992; 1996) wrote about change in the context of business organizations, but his explanation of *unknowable open-ended change* shares conceptual links with Moore’s (1963) *sharp breaks between eras*. The commonality described is an extreme

and abrupt shift from the old societal (individual, group, community and in Stacey's case organizational) paradigm to the new.

When managers [or society in general] confront open-ended change, ... [they are] faced with actions and events (past, present or future) that have unknowable—not merely currently unknown—consequences. Links between cause and effect are lost in the detail of those events because small changes escalate and self-reinforcing circles appear. The key difficulty becomes that of identifying what the problems and opportunities are, deciding what questions to ask, rather than finding answers. The situation is ambiguous, and the responses ... are equivocal. In these uniquely new situations, old shared mental models showing how to design actions do not work; new mental models have to be developed and shared before anything can happen. ...

The unpredictability of specific events within fuzzy categories, which is the hallmark of open-ended change, leads to ambiguity and confusion. Although human minds are well equipped to deal with such situations, the situations remain difficult because they require developing new mental models through analogical reasoning. That difficulty is magnified many times when a new mental model must come to be shared by a number of people. ... We cannot understand what they decide to do without understanding the impact of their personalities and the impact of group dynamics. In this kind of situation, people typically feel insecure and become anxious, with the result that their group dynamics become much more complex and may often become bizarre. There is a strong tendency to apply inappropriate mental models to the learning process. (Stacey, 1992, pp. 156-157)

The above lengthy excerpt provides detailed insight into Conner's (1993) view of change within times of crisis.

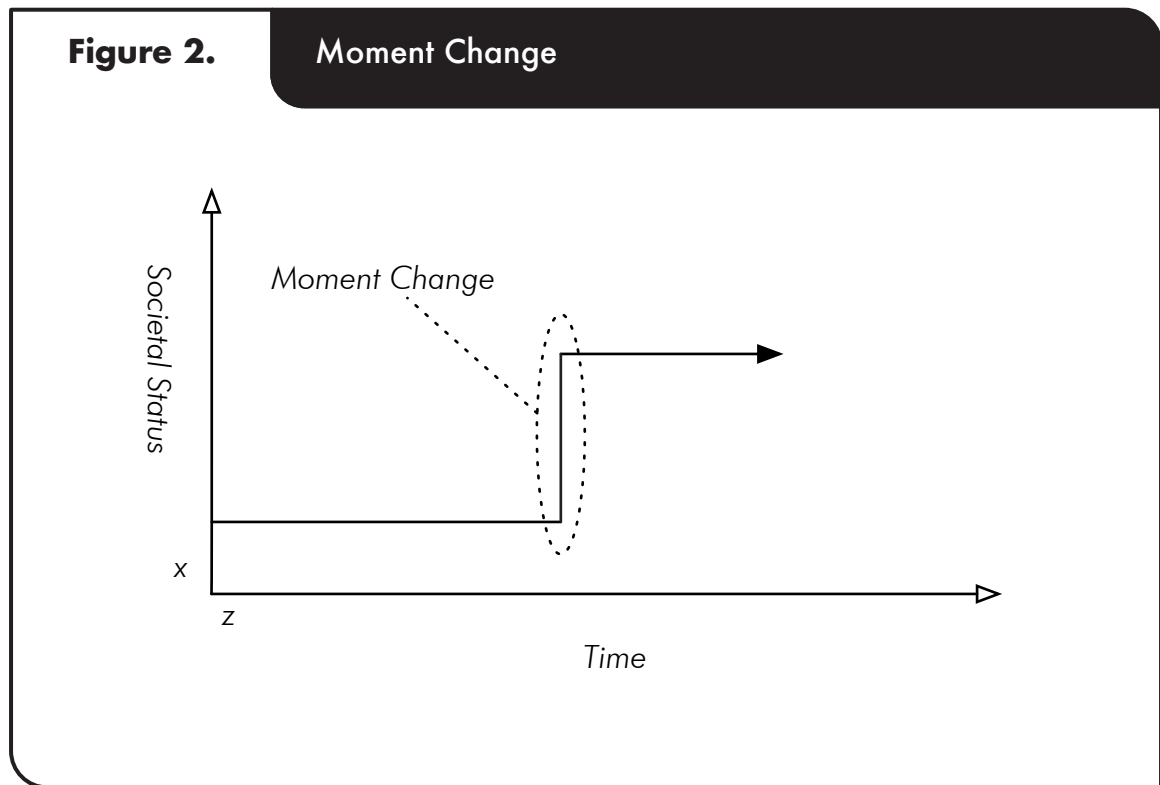
A crisis is the point at which it becomes apparent that what we had planned is no longer feasible and our expectations are disrupted. ... [I]f it is a significant departure from what we expected, a crisis ensues because ambiguity enters the situation. (p. 28)

Sharing parallel hypotheses with both Stacey (1992) and Conner (1993), though written within the context of sociology, Sztopka (1994) designated Moore's (1963) *sharp breaks between eras as transformation*.

Such changes may be conceived as touching the core of social reality, as their repercussions are usually to be felt in all aspects of social life, transforming its overall quality. For example structural changes occur with the appearance of a leadership and power hierarchy in a group, the bureaucratization of a social movement, the replacement of autocratic rule by democratic government, the levelling of social inequalities by tax reform. (Sztopka, 1994, p. 19)

Moment change is certainly in the forefront during times of crisis, or transformation, and often represents an entirely new societal reality within a very constricted timeframe. Similar to drawn change, moment change occurs as a result of tacit or instigative pressures. A rapid redirection of society's orientation or path resulting from unknown or non-prescribed pressures may be understood to be tacit moment change. Similar redirection resulting from a specific action, event or policy may be understood to be instigative moment change.

A Model of Moment Change



Like the model for drawn change discussed earlier, *Figure 2* provides a representation of the passage of time (along the z -axis) and societal (individual, group or community) status (along the x -axis). At a specific moment in time, crisis, or any number of other catalysts, causes an unpredicted or ill-predicted rapid and intense redirection of society's path. Moment change is the point at which society is abruptly redirected from its previous path or *era*, to use Moore's (1963) terminology, and embarks upon its next.

The Magnitude of Change

Our discussion of drawn and moment change, and the tacit or instigative pressures

that surround and affect them, does not yet speak of the severity with which the change occurs. An exploration of this severity, which shall hereafter be refer to as *magnitude*, as described by Moore (1963), allows one to discuss the impact a change has on the individual. Ultimately affected is the individual's tacit or instigative response to the change that has occurred, or is occurring.

Education within the Context of Social and Political Change

Much is written on the subject of change from the perspective of business, organizations and society in general (Conner, 1993; Harper, 1989; Moore, 1963; Schatz, 2002; Stacey, 1992, 1996; Summers-Effler, 2002; Sztompka, 1994; Wolin, 1999). Others provide insight into change as it often occurs within schools and educational systems (Anderson, 1993; Cuban, 1988; Cunningham, 1982; Evans, 1993; Fullan, 1991, 1993, 2000, 2001; Goodlad, 1975; Holzman, 1993; Wagner, 1993). The focus of this study, however, is not to be wholly found within the breadth of knowledge presented and commonly attributed to change in education. The works of Cuban (1988), Cunningham (1982), Fullan (1991; 1993; 2000; 2001), Goodlad (1975) and others tend to deal more with instigative change within education and its associated effects, as opposed to the effects of broader social and political change on individuals within the education system—students, for example. In fact, literature actually addressing such influence of change on education is scarce. It is therefore within this void that the present study exists.

La Belle and Ward (1990) evaluated seven *peripheral* countries (Algeria, China, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iran, Mozambique and Nicaragua) in their work entitled *Education*

Reform when Nations Undergo Radical Political and Social Transformation. They discussed pre- and post-transformation education systems and resulting effects on control (governance), access, tracking (streaming of children), curriculum, personnel, language of instruction, literacy and transformation (ultimately reflective of tacit or instigative moment change) in the context of national political and social change. The administrative experience predominates their study, and so provides some tangential points that reflect the general situation in which schools found themselves under these circumstances. The summary of their conclusions may be found in a few points. First, they found that “[f]ollowing a transformation, most countries did increase access, both by expanding systems and by altering the rules of entry” (La Belle & Ward, 1990, p. 104). Second, members of the former ruling class were able to “maintain favourable rules of access at the higher levels or more prestigious tracks of education” (p. 105). To state it less obtusely, those formerly in power were able to maintain pockets of influence within the post-transformation system.

Reform within the studied systems was presented cautiously by La Belle and Ward (1990), and warned the reader against an exclusively positive interpretation. Plausible explanations for the instability of reforms were drawn from the conflicting interests of groups found within the societies surveyed, and the “lack of support among the civil servants or bureaucrats in educational agencies who are charged with implementing reforms” (La Belle & Ward, 1990, p. 105). Citing China and Algeria as examples, post-transformation reforms restructured curricula “to train workers in technical and vocational skills” (p. 105) and to expedite their building of “new kinds of citizens” (p. 105), while linking them ideologically to supportive countries within the

world order. Their study showed that literacy and other “non-formal education efforts” (La Belle & Ward, 1990, p. 105) in the post-transformation environments of the countries examined could be closely linked to campaigns propagating the new ideology or serving the purpose of *building new citizenry*. “For these cases, reformers can conclude that governments are willing to expand considerable effort and resources on educational objectives if they perceive sufficient political payoffs” (p. 105). La Belle and Ward concluded:

This analysis reinforces the validity of the correspondence between socio-political influences and education policies and practices. Studying transformations provides fertile ground for analysing how such correspondence changes in a relatively brief period. Within such correspondences, the analysis also points up [*sic*] the interplay of vested interests attempting to use education both as a vehicle for access to social resources and for maintaining such resources. It is that interplay that most clearly shows the biases [*sic*] inherent in education as schools and non-formal programmes promote particular agendas in particular ways depending on the goals of the competing populations. At times, this correspondence relates to economic imperatives and at other times it reflects ideological and cultural biases [*sic*]. (1990, pp. 105-106)

As an overview, La Belle and Ward’s (1990) study provides a contextual and environmental background for examining the experiences of students faced with such massive social and political change. Though their seven focal points do not provide

insight into the place of the individual, they do begin to shed some, although unfocused, light on the phenomenon to be studied in chapters that follow.

Resilience

Literature discussing resilience is vast. This is all the more apparent when one considers the variety of synonyms present within disciplines outside of education and educational psychology (Richardson, 2002). The field of positive psychology provides insight into an array of human qualities found to be associated with resilient individuals. As Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) remarked, “psychologists have scant knowledge of what makes life worth living. [Yet t]hey have come to understand quite a bit about how people survive and endure under conditions of adversity” (p. 5). Building their case, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi developed an understanding of what I will call resilient characteristics from the perspective of two foci—the individual’s personal *traits* and the value system of their group or community.

At the individual level, it is about positive individual traits: the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom.

At the group level, it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic. (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5)

In other words, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) argued that survival and endurance “under conditions of adversity” (p. 5) are functions of two traits: the personal traits possessed by the individual, and the traits of their community.

Others in Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's field studied such traits in detail. Happiness was linked to resilience by Buss (2000), who explained that individuals' perspectives on their own happiness provide insight into how they react to "destructive social conditions" (p. 22). Similarly, Diener (2000) suggested that individuals' happiness, or what he calls *subjective well-being*, is important in understanding how they "adapt ... to good and bad conditions" (p. 40). Peterson (2000) believed that *optimism* is linked to the definition of resilience used within this study, as it contributes to "freedom from trauma" (p. 44). Ryan and Deci (2000) concurred adding that *self-determination* builds an individual's "intrinsic motivation" (p. 76). Schwartz (2000) cautioned that *self-determination* tempered only by "rules of some sort ... leads to well-being [and] optional functioning" (p. 81)—a fascinating statement juxtaposed against the broader nature of this study. Buss (2000), Diener (2000), and Peterson's (2000) work related to the personal traits that the individual may possess, noted earlier by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) in their discussion of survival, which are equally significant in relation to resilience. Schwartz (2000) and Ryan and Deci (2000) presented commentary on the traits of the community. Their collective insights may be considered interesting in their application to child or educational psychology, but quickly become fundamental when viewed in the context of resiliency theory.

Much of the literature dealing with the study of resilience introduces the reader to a population of individuals (very often students) for whom, more than others, resilience signifies a demarcation of their ability to succeed beyond great social, familial, or personal challenges (Bosworth & Earthman, 2002; Craig, 1999; Flach, 1988; McMillan, 1992; Richardson, 2002; Richardson et al., 1990; Rutter, 1985, 1999). Such individuals

are often classified as *at-risk*. In his 1992 review of literature, McMillan provided an account of the development of the notion of *at-risk* when he described its original use “to signify a ‘culturally deprived’ child in terms of home life. It then evolved into a school definition where the at-risk child did not mesh, or fit in, with school characteristics. Currently, the at-risk problem is seen as a complex interplay of a multitude of variables—home, school and societal—that combine to give a student at-risk status” (McMillan, 1992, p. 4).

McMillan (1992) developed a list of characteristics defining at-risk students, or the characteristics that studies provide, “that result in the failure of these children to graduate from high school, attain work skills and become productive members of society” (McMillan, 1992, p. 4). Ultimately, these are factors which negatively influence their future experiences and opportunities to succeed, something Rutter (1999) called *negative chain reactions*. As his study progressed, McMillan (1992) found that “[d]espite incredible hardships and several at-risk factors, some students appear to develop characteristics and coping skills that enable[d] them to succeed. ... These students can be termed ‘resilient’” (p. 19).

Resilience Theory and Resilience in Change

Much credit for the development of resilience theory is given to Flach (1988), whose work was built upon by Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002). The latter studies worked from definitions of resilience—including the influential psychiatric research of Werner (1982), Rutter (1985), and Garmezy, Masten, and Tellegen (1984), and Flach’s earlier work—which predated McMillan’s (1992) review of at-risk

individuals. A contextual framework and model was established and provides a picture of resilience in response to the basic question: “How are ... resilient qualities acquired?” (Richardson, 2002, p. 310). As is shown later, Flach’s (1988) *Law of Distribution and Reintegration* provided a suitable departure point from which one may discuss his contextual framework for capturing resilience as a process, later improved upon by Richardson, et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002).

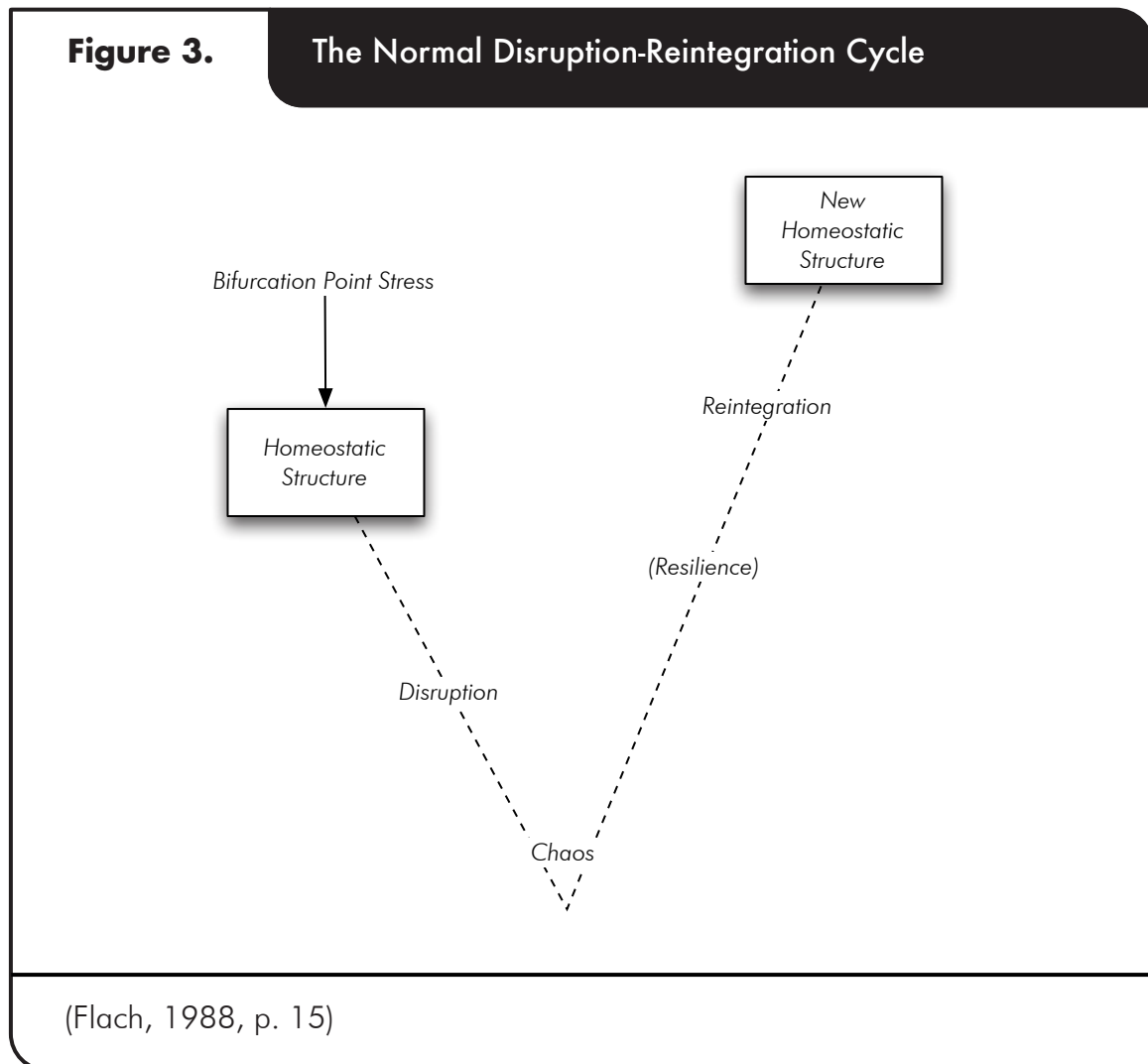
The Law of Distribution and Reintegration

Flach (1988) dedicated a chapter of his book *Resilience: Discovering a New Strength at Times of Stress* to what he called the “Law of Distribution and Reintegration.”

I came to realize that significantly stressful events, by their very nature, *must* shake us up and often disrupt the structures of the world around us as well. Moreover, such turbulence has to be accompanied by distress, which can range from mild unhappiness, anxiety, or impatience all the way to a state of profound anguish in which we might seriously question who and what we are and the nature of the personal worlds we inhabit. (Flach, 1988, p. 14, italics in original)

The *stressful events* to which Flach (1988) referred in the latter passage include times in an individual’s life where his or her personal “equilibrium” (p. 13) is distressed. Ultimately, the *event* is not so important as the *effect* its occurrence has on the structures the individual used to frame his or her life. Flach provided a personal example that serves to illustrate his contention, and which may be used to deconstruct his argument:

Slowly, painfully, I began to put the pieces of my life together. My father was gone; now, I was the father. Over the years, I had grown quite dependent on the structure of my life; now, much of it had vanished, and I was faced with the need to create a new structure for myself and my family. (Flach, 1988, p. 13)



Though Flach's personal stressful event included the death of his father, the senility of his mother, the illness of his son and the prospect of a divorce, his broader point was that

any stressful event “shake[s] up and often disrupt[s] the structures of the world around us” (Flach, 1988, p. 14); in doing so, we are presented with a period of chaos followed by a rebuilding to accommodate our new environment.

Table 1.

Flach's (1988) Law of Psychobiological Disruption and Reintegration

- In order to learn and to experience meaningful change,
□ we must fall apart.
- During periods of chaos, we are at varying degrees of
□ risk, as we cannot determine in advance what direction
□ our future will take.
- By making us more knowledgeable and adaptive, each
□ period of disruption and reintegration is necessary to
□ prepare us to meet the stresses that lie ahead.
- Failure to pass successfully through any stress cycle can
□ leave us crippled, without the strengths we will need
□ when other bifurcation points appear.

(Flach, 1988, p. 20)

In developing his theory and model of resilience (*Figure 3*), Flach (1988) began by providing a definition of terms. The initial life structure one holds, Flach called *homeostasis*. The stressful event or events that disrupt homeostasis, Flach called *bifurcation points*—“a term derived from the language of contemporary physics

representing moments of extreme change” (p. 14). It is at times when bifurcation points disrupt one’s life that homeostasis is lost. The result is a *disruption* of structures and a possible disintegration into chaos. Flach noted, “...the eventual outcome of such chaos is totally unpredictable. For at such times, we are at great risk.” (p. 14). Such a remark complements Conner’s (1993) insight into the unpredictability of life experiences during moments of change.

A crisis is the point at which it becomes apparent that what we had planned is no longer feasible and our expectations are disrupted ... [I]f it is a significant departure from what we expected, a crisis ensues because ambiguity enters the situation. (p. 28)

Disruption and chaos, to be sure! One may draw further links between Conner’s *change* and *crisis* and Flach’s *disruption* where Conner (1993) noted, “we feel most vulnerable to change when we are surprised that we are surprised” (p. 71).

Continuing his explanation, Flach (1988) discussed the consequences of this *chaos*.

We may remain forever more or less destabilized. We may even form a new homeostasis structured around disability, anguish and inadequate coping behavior. Or, under optimal circumstances, the stage may be set for integration into a new and more effective level of personal coherence. (p. 14)

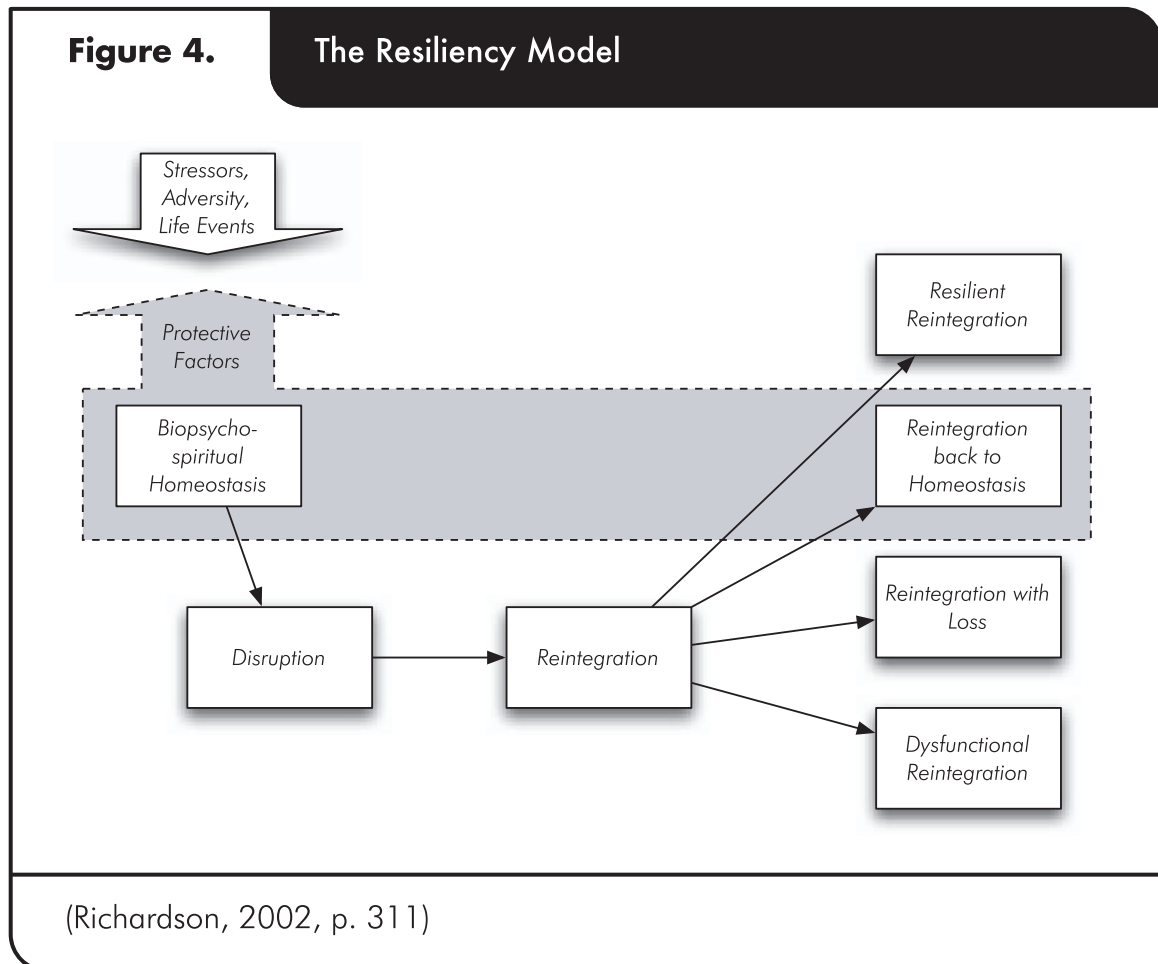
Flach resumed deconstructing his model and noted that *reintegration* represents a “healthy response to stress” (p. 17); and further, it “involves putting the pieces of ourselves and our worlds together again into new homeostases” (p. 17). His summary, or “law of psychobiological disruption and reintegration” (p. 20, *see Table 1*), outlined the

framework for further chapters in his book; it also served as a point of departure for Richardson, et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002).

The Resiliency Model

Richardson, et al. (1990) built on the model presented by Flach (1988) for the expressed purpose of providing “a framework for prevention[,] and creat[ing] the structure for piecemeal studies and articles that currently exist in the prevention literature” (Richardson et al., 1990, p. 33). Richardson, et al.’s focus on *prevention* is indicative of their understanding of resilience—as it is a “process of coping with disruptive, stressful, or challenging life events in a way that provides the individual with additional protective and coping skills [beyond those they held] prior to the disruption that results from the event” (p. 34). For Richardson, et al., such an understanding meant that resilience may be seen as a collection of skills that can be developed. It therefore recognizes the contention that traits promoting or stimulating resilience may be taught or, at the very least, managed through opportunities of environmental control or ecology. In this way, the process of resilience was distinguished by Richardson, et al. (1990) from its expression in literature other than their own as “a state-trait or characteristic within the individual” (pp. 33-34). In other words, Richardson, et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002) saw resilience not as a binary characteristic of the individual from birth, but rather as a collection of characteristics developed over time. Such a distinction is quite clearly in line with Flach’s (1988) *law of psychobiological disruption and reintegration* and is, as shown later, complementary to Conner’s (1993) perspective on *change*. It is also important to point out the link between a process concept of resilience and Rutter’s

(1985; 1999) suggestion that environmental planning was a key component in the development of resilient youth, for Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002) recursively relied upon Rutter's contributions to the literature on the subject. Ultimately, Richardson, et al. and Richardson emphasized the resilience *process* and *environmental* aspects of that *process* as their addition to Flach's (1988) *Normal Disruption-Reintegration Cycle* (see Figure 3) in the construction of their *Resiliency Model* (Figure 4).



Richardson et al. (1990) suggested that their model captures a specific point in an individual's life. The length of this point in time is of little consequence, and will vary from individual to individual and situation to situation. For some, it may only occupy a moment or two. For others, such points may encompass years. The model's foundation relies on the contention, supported by Rutter (1985; 1993; 1999) and Flach (1988), "that in order to become more resilient, an individual must pass through challenges, stressors and risks, become disorganized, reorganize his or her life, learn from the experiences, and surface stronger with more coping skills and protective factors" (Flach, 1988, p. 35). Before pulling a significant part of this thesis' conceptual framework from Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson's (2002) model, several terms used within require clear definition. As a definition of component parts take shape, the operation and implications of the resiliency model are later discussed.

Though a more vastly verbose definition was provided by Richardson et al. (1990), Richardson's (2002) characterization of *biopsychospiritual homeostasis* seems to concisely address the concept.

The description of resiliency begins with any point in time when a person has adapted to her/his situation in life. The term "biopsychospiritual homeostasis" is used to describe this adaptive state of mind, body, and spirit. The issue of adaptation, wholeness, and interdependence of mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions of living can become as complex as the reader cares to make, but for [many individuals], an understanding of the model accords choice and control. Biopsychospiritual homeostasis is a point in time when one has adapted physically, mentally, and spiritually to a set of circumstances whether good or

bad. [Individuals] call this a comfort zone, which may be a misnomer in that adaptation may be anything but comfortable. (Richardson, 2002, pp. 310-311)

Such a definition concurs with Flach's (1988) *homeostatic structure* presented fourteen years earlier, though adds a spiritual element. The spiritual element is key to Richardson's (2002) model as it recognizes the importance of an individual's value and behavioural system. "Spiritual homeostasis is a state best capsulated as value and behavioural congruence. [It] exists when a person chooses or adopts a value or belief system that provides guidelines for living and then abides behaviourally by that system" (Richardson et al., 1990, p. 35). Threatening this homeostasis are life experiences, needs, "stressors, adversity, opportunities" (Richardson, 2002, p. 311) and other changes of various magnitudes.

Threats are counteracted or diminished, however, by *protective factors*. In very basic terms, a protective factor may be an internal or external support system that shield an individual from stressors, adversity, and others. Richardson et al. (1990) suggested that protective factors operate on various levels. Some are biological ("tolerance for pain, rejuvenation [healing] capabilities, fitness levels, ... proper rest, good nutrition, and avoidance of harmful substances" [p. 36]), others are psychological or spiritual ("[g]ood self esteem[,] ...[g]ood decision making skills[,] ...[i]nternal locus of control[,] ...[s]elf confidence[,] ...[g]ood sense of humor[,] ...[i]ndependence of spirit[, and] ...[p]ositive futuristic vision" [p. 36], among others). Research upon which Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002) framed their model suggests that external protective factors appear to include gender—an individual simply cannot choose their gender: "it appears that for many psychosocial adversities, girls are less vulnerable than boys" (Rutter, 1985,

p. 600)—socioeconomic status, and familial and ecological support systems (Garmezy et al., 1984). As is explained in greater detail within the following paragraphs, these protective factors are an extremely significant component of resiliency as it relates to Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson's (2002) model.

Though perhaps tangential to this study, a nonetheless interesting insight appeared in a statement by Rutter (1985) suggesting that the measurement, let alone palpable awareness, of protective factors supporting an individual seems tantamount to an enigmatic pursuit. "[P]rotective factors may have no detectable effect in the absence of any subsequent stressor; their role is to modify the response to later adversity rather than to foster normal development in any direct sense" (p. 600). For this very reason, the development of an effective and definitive educational package or program with its *measurable* end found in the development of resilience in children, adolescents or adults, appears a fanciful endeavour.

Disruption occurs as a result of weakness in protective factors. Richardson's (2002) model shows a disruption as a loss of biopsychospiritual homeostasis. For the individual, this loss "is unpleasant and even agonizing" (Richardson et al., 1990, p. 36), but within the context of their model, Richardson and Richardson et al. suggested that...

...the disruption is beneficial to the resilient individual. Surviving an experience leaves the person better skilled and stronger. The unpleasantness of the disruptive state creates a situation that essentially forces [them] to look inwardly and adapt competently to life events and develop new negotiating skills. (Richardson et al., 1990, p. 36)

Disruptions mean that an individual's intact world paradigm is changed and may result in perceived negative or positive outcomes. It means that a new piece of life's puzzle is there to potentially add to an individual's view of the world. To add to the piece of the puzzle, the pieces of one's paradigms that are affected by the new piece fall apart, thereby allowing the new piece to be incorporated into the world view. (Richardson, 2002, p. 311)

Many people take on challenges or stressors because they know of the growth opportunities. The [overall] disruption may not be of a depressing nature but rather an excitement to master or accomplish. The disruption still occurs in that the experience is new and pieces of previous experiences must be taken to form a new perspective to face the challenge at hand. Resultant disorganization must occur to face the challenge effectively. (Richardson et al., 1990, p. 36)

The magnitude of a disruption is dependant upon the strength of the protective factors. Protective factors shield the individual from disruptions caused by minor stressors or changes in ones life. For this reason, Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002) contended that we are not constantly bombarded by disruptions as a result of minute or previously experienced stressors or change, not unlike *drawn change* discussed earlier. In all cases, disruption implies a period of chaos. Rutter (1999) argued an important observation, indirectly supportive of this question of magnitude. Drastic changes in life, which Rutter called *turning-points* (not unlike *moment change*), provide individuals with radically new views of their world—both negative and positive.

Reintegration is a period of reorganizing one's world view to account for both the stressor or change that caused the disruption, and the end result of chaos that ensues.

“[P]eople try to recover by creatively putting the pieces back together or by systematically problem solving and rebuilding” (Richardson et al., 1990, p. 37). In a sense, one is trying to reconstruct a biopsychospiritual homeostasis consistent with a new reality. As was suggested above by Rutter (1999) and confirmed within Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson’s (2002) model, there are a number of possible reintegration outcomes; Richardson et al. and Richardson outlined four. “*Resilient Reintegration* reflects the optimal level of adaptation” (Richardson et al., 1990, p. 37, emphasis in original) as it means an individual has been successful in constructing a new homeostasis that has turned the disruptive experience into a new and additional protective factor; a new level of functioning has been accomplished. Ultimately, resilient reintegration “leaves a person more skilled[, and these new] skills may be used for subsequent life events of a similar nature” (p. 37). “*Homeostatic Reintegration* is the fight by the individual to return to the same level of functioning that was evident prior to the life event” (p. 37, emphasis in original). In this case, disruptions of a similar nature may once again affect the individual in the future. “*Maladaptive Reintegration* [denoted as *Reintegration with a Loss* in Figure 4] represents a situation where the impact of the life event was so significant that the individual reintegrates his/her world view at a lower level of homeostasis” (p. 37, emphasis in original). As a result, protective factors that may have once been at the individual’s aid are no longer present. “*Dysfunctional Reintegration* reflects the need for some form of psycho-therapy” (p. 37, emphasis in original). Rutter (1999) characterized the result of dysfunctional reintegration as *negative chain reactions* where, in Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson’s (2002) language, an

individual's dysfunctional reintegration tends to beget future recursive dysfunctional reintegration.

A Theoretical Framework

This thesis used an organizational and theoretical framework uniting the models of *drawn* and *moment change* with the *resiliency model* described earlier paragraphs. Through the course of this literature review, key concepts were discussed that when interlocked, assemble a specific view of both resilience in terms of change, and change in terms of resilience. As may be concluded from the literature available, the underlying distinction between drawn and moment change is all the more significant when examined aside the resiliency model. Quite clearly, Flach (1988), Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002) supported the notion that a drawn change propagates stressors more capably managed by an individual's protective factors than those resulting from a moment change. The perceived magnitude of that moment change likewise affects the level of reintegration achieved. For this reason, elicited perceptions and meaning made of the events experienced by the participants in this study are distinctly important and are examined against such an interlocked resiliency-change model.

It is the goal of this research to better understand the experiences of students within all-encompassing change. To this end, the resiliency and change models provide a framework around which the contextual experience of this study's participants may be examined, and, at a later time, perhaps provide a framework for other students within change that do not share specific context. The resiliency-change model seems appropriate within the context of this particular study because it appears to be void of

cultural, linguistic and perceptual influence—an important consideration within a cross-cultural study, such as this.

The Soviet Context

The Soviet experience was, in many ways, profoundly different than the experiences of liberal democracies. In the final months of 1991 as the Soviet state began to disintegrate, an overwhelming upheaval of social, economic and political forces relentlessly thrust the population in a direction markedly foreign to their civic culture. This change affected individuals in different ways. For the older generations, the future held no security. Economically, government pensions were in no way indexed to the rampant hyperinflation taking hold (Arel, 1998); politically, where seventy years of established civil dialogic structures—class struggle (Holmes, Read, & Voskresenskaya, 1995; Nikandrov, 1995; USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1992), dialectic and scientific materialism (Holmes et al., 1995; Nikandrov, 1995) and democratic centralism (*Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, 1977; Holmes et al., 1995)—were now labelled *destructive*, or worse. For the younger generations, the future was unpredictable and disjointed: economic and political opportunity balanced against growing unemployment (USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1992), crime (Brodinsky, 1992; USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1992), an “alienation from the older generations[,].... national intolerance[, and racism]” (USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences, 1992, pp. 10-11).

To examine this period of change in a socialist system by way of its academic literature is extremely difficult. The variety of published sources requires a distinctly

cautious eye—especially when confronted by literature produced within the Soviet Union itself. Indeed, for the vast majority of its existence, the Soviet publishing industry was a *tool* of the state and *mouthpiece* of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [CPSU]. Such a pretext presents a serious credibility problem, notably when the interests of the state are served through the publication of propagandist innuendo, statistics and Marxist *scientific* interpretations of historical progress (Begisheva, 1992; Holmes et al., 1995; Morgan, 1991; Nikandrov, 1995). An argument could be made, however, that the search for credibility in western literature about the Soviet experience is equally problematic, especially during high points of Cold War animosity.

It is not until Gorbachev's institutionalization of perestroika and glasnost between 1986 and 1991 that hints of credibility appear out of anti-sycophant criticism by members of the ruling elite—in other words, official permission to print the truth was granted (Yeltsin, 1987). Soviet-published literature of this period generally becomes less propaganda rich, and more critical of the past and present—under the guise of rebuilding the socialist ideal. To complicate matters further, the rush to criticize anything and everything resulted in a recognized dysfunction of glasnost. It therefore becomes extremely important to examine what is *written between the lines*. By way of an example, reading between the lines perhaps clarifies the critical thought process employed within the following paragraphs. If one were to examine a document of importance at the time, specifically Yagodin's (1989) report to the All-Union Congress of Public Education Workers entitled *Towards Higher Standards in Education through its Humanization and Democratization*, one may conclude by title alone that the system must neither be nor have been particularly *humane* or *democratic*. In all cases, however,

it is not the purpose of this review to pronounce moral judgement on the nature of Soviet or post-Soviet society, politics, economics or education.

The Roots of Soviet Education

The roots of education are found in the roots of societal expression (Dewey, 1935). To fully understand the character of Soviet education, one must examine the foundations of Soviet society (Renihan & Hromyk, 1973); to understand Soviet society one must understand the ideology of its birth. Fundamentally, one need make little effort to prove through in-depth research that Soviet society was moulded into its shape by the hands of the CPSU. Indeed, Marx (1845) upholds the importance of such an endeavour when he noted that “[p]hilosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; ... the point is to change it” (p. 5). Guided by the collected political- and economic-theory works of high-level members of the State apparatus and CPSU nomenclature, successive generations of leadership rely on three foundational tenets of communist thought credited to the plethora of philosophy produced by Marx and Lenin: dialectical and historical materialism, class struggle, and the pre-eminence of the CPSU in the life of the working class.

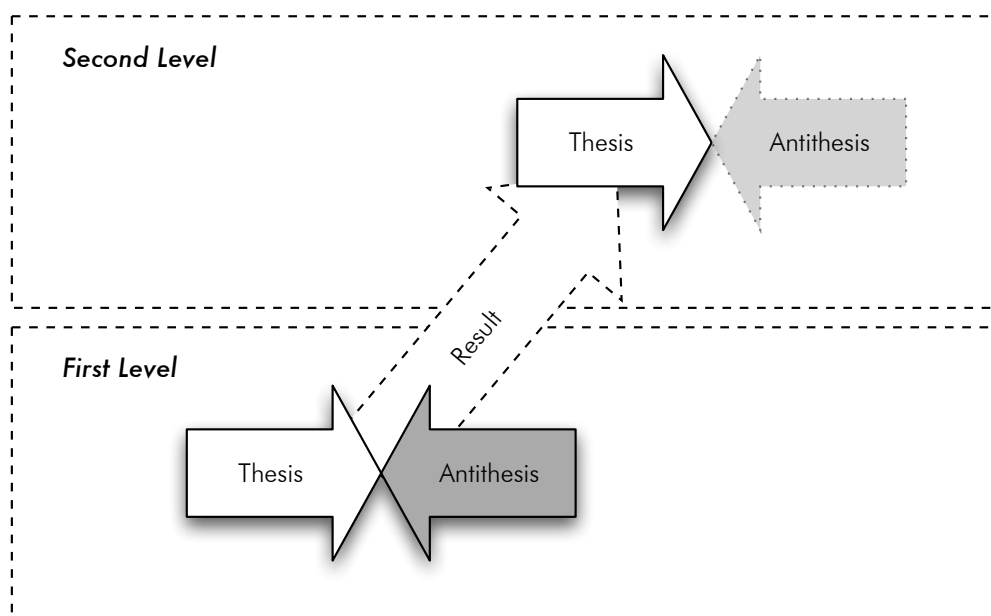
Dialectical and Historical Materialism

Karl Marx’ work may be understood more clearly when placed in historical context. In fact, the root of much of his philosophical study centred around the nature of *historical context*. Influenced by the evolutionary movement of the mid-nineteenth century (Smith, 1976) and the work of prominent German philosophers Feuerbach and

Hegel, as well as the ancient Greek works of Democritus and Epicurus, Marx examined the very nature of historical transition and change from a *scientific* and *materialist* perspective. Marx looked deep within historical phenomena for patterns and efficiencies of real action and not simply ideology and philosophical discourse; essentially focussing on the distinction of *thinking* and *being*. An Hegelian philosophical method known as *dialectics* modelled the patterns he found (Engels, 1878; Lenin, 1918b; Marx & Engels, 1846; Volkov, Vodolazov, Poshatayev, Petrenko, & Pirogov, 1982).

Figure 5.

The Hegelian Dialectic



(Engels, 1878; Lenin, 1918b; Marx & Engels, 1846; Volkov et al., 1982)

Vastly oversimplified, dialectics is a construct that suggests all ideas (or theses) will eventually encounter an antithesis (*Figure 5*): a struggle will result between these two ideas, and the eventual outcome will be a more advanced thesis which will encounter its own respective antithesis (Lenin, 1918b; Marx & Engels, 1846; Volkov et al., 1982). For Hegel, the dialectic represented the development of ideas and the struggle between them. Marx rejected this focus on ideas (considering all idealism too closely associated with religion), took from Hegel the basic principles of the dialectic, and replaced the thesis with more concrete concepts of the real, and *material*, world: action, motion, economics and ultimately history. Marx, in conjunction with Engels, suggested that the basis of all human interaction was linked in some way to an individual's labour and the exchange of that labour for the necessities of life (Engels, 1878).

The materialist conception of history starts from the proposition that the production [of the means to support human life] and, next to production, the exchange of things produced, is the basis of all social structure; that in every society that has appeared in history, the manner in which wealth is distributed and society divided into classes or orders is dependent upon what is produce, how it is produced, and how the products are exchanged. From this point of view the final causes of all social changes and political revolutions are to be sought, not in men's brains, not in man's better insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought, not in the *philosophy*, but in the *economics* of each particular epoch. (Engels, 1878, p. 323, emphasis and editorial in original)

From this point, Marx asserted that the dialectical relationship of individual and societal production—*social structure* to use Engels' (1878) terms—is the consistent link underscoring all historical progression. Through history, the manipulation of control over production and the means of production had, by the mid-nineteenth century, eventually lead to the division of individuals into social and economic classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat—"the 'haves'... and ... the 'have-nots'" (Nikandrov, 1995, p. 49). The thesis of capitalism was about to meet its socialist antithesis, the result of such class struggle was communism (Volkov et al., 1982).

Class Struggle

The notion of perpetual and historically ubiquitous class struggle is fundamental to understanding the civic culture of Soviet society. Since all social structures of life were *scientifically* accounted for by the relationship between the individual and production and the exchange of their production, and since such a relationship was *historically proven* to yield class struggle, all of society was therefore based upon the class struggle model (Engels, 1878; Harper, 1989; Lenin, 1918a, 1918b; Marx & Engels, 1846; Volkov et al., 1982). Nikandrov (1995) suggested that one could never escape one's class, and as such ...

... the thinking of each individual is determined by his or her belonging to a particular social class. ...

This simplistic view was very convenient for the people who captured political power in Russia in October 1917. It was so easy to detect friend from foe by the touchstone of class affiliation. Furthermore, since the opposition

between the two classes was considered “antagonistic”, that is to say uncompromising to the last, the only way to end it was by “liquidating” the (formerly) ruling class. This macabre word could mean exile, confinement in a labour camp or physical extermination. At the beginning of the 1930s J. Stalin stated proudly that the kulaks (better-off peasants) had been “liquidated” as a class. (Nikandrov, 1995, p. 49)

In practice, *class struggle* became a euphemism for *forced conformity of thought* in line with Marx’s proven and scientific-materialist understanding of history.

Pre-eminence of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

Lenin, perhaps the most diligent student of Marx and Engels, wrote in great detail of the importance of the proletariat within the dialectic and their value in the struggle between the productive forces of capitalism and socialism—and the resulting communism. Having said this, he concluded that the proletariat as a class were perhaps unaware of their place in historical materialism; the role of the Communist Party, therefore, was to guide the proletariat toward their ultimate goal: communist society. Lenin’s argument suggests that the Communist Party unquestionably and exclusively served the interests of the proletariat, and as such is the only true representative of the proletarian masses (Lenin, 1902).

All the great victories scored by the working people of the USSR in the revolutionary transformation of society are directly or indirectly linked to the leading role of the Communist Party. The Party headed the victorious Socialist Revolution in October 1917, put political power in the country in the hands of the

working class who were supported by the millions upon millions of peasants. The sweeping programme of socialist construction—industrialization of the country and collectivization of agriculture—was carried out along the lines mapped out by the Communist Party. ...

The Communist Party is the political leader of the Soviet people. The Party has developed a scientifically based internal and foreign policy, coordinates and directs all the classes and social groups in the country, all the big and small nationalities of the Soviet Union for realizing the overall goal, taking into account both the common interests of all working people and the specific national interests of the peoples of the Soviet Union. (*The CPSU: Stages of history*, 1975, pp. 6-7)

Further, the legal entrenchment of the CPSU into the civil, social, economic and cultural structures of Soviet life are perhaps best represented within article six (detailing single party rule) and article twenty-five (detailing communist education) of the 1977 Soviet Constitution.

Article 6. The leading and guiding force of Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organisations and public organisations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The CPSU exists for the people and serves the people.

The Communist Party, armed with Marxism-Leninism, determines the general perspectives of the development of society and the course of the home and foreign policy of the USSR, directs the great constructive work of the Soviet people, and imparts a planned, systematic and theoretically substantiated

character to their struggle for the victory of communism. (*Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, 1977, p.16)

Article 25. In the USSR there is a uniform system of public education, which is being constantly improved, that provides general education and vocational training for citizens, serves the communist education and intellectual and physical development of the youth, and trains them for work and social activity. (*Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, 1977, p.22)

As the excerpts above suggest, the CPSU used Lenin's (1902) instructions as the justification for their pre-eminence in all aspects of Soviet life. For this thesis, the relationship between the CPSU and the details of Soviet educational life are of fundamental importance.

Interpreting Soviet Educational Practice

Wading through volumes of rhetorical and propagandist literature on Soviet education, one encounters a fervent melodrama under which the nature of education in the Soviet Union is found. The difficulty remains, however, in deciphering combinations of historical statistics and bureaucratic jargon, much of which presents no palpable or useful picture of the practice of educating Soviet youth aside from examples of the earlier mentioned entrenchment of the Communist Party into the administration of all scholastic endeavours. For example, a paragraph taken from one manuscript discussing the nature of education in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic is analogous to the vast majority of Soviet-produced literature pre-dating 1986.

V. I. Lenin's speeches at the All-Russian Congress of Internationalist Teachers (June 1918), the 1st All-Russian Congress on Education (August 1919), at the 2nd All-Russian Congress of Internationalist teachers (January 1919), and his historic speech at the 3rd Congress of the Komsomol in October 1920 became the programmes of the teachers, school system and pedagogy on the content, organization and methods of teaching. They served as the basis of creating such a system of education and upbringing of the growing generation which would be founded on close ties of the school with life and the building of socialism in the country, providing the pupils with deep, sound knowledge, skills and habits, developing their capabilities and ability for independent learning, and forming a communist consciousness and morals. (Aleksuk et al., 1970, p. 55)

Though this suggests that Lenin's goals for elementary and secondary education in the Soviet Union developed "knowledge, skills and ... independent learning", and since in practice the socialist system was predicated on collective consciousness (Begisheva, 1992; Krasovitskii, 1992; Nikandrov, 1995), the academic merit of such trite wadding is at best questionable. Before 1986, indeed before perestroika and glasnost, foreign sources provide more substantive insight into the nature of Soviet education.

[T]he chief purpose of education is to serve the needs of society. That is, the schools must help in the building of communist society by producing people imbued not only with the necessary knowledge and skills but the communist values as well. [I]n the U.S.S.R., this is done by various means: by direct teaching of political theory; through other subjects in the curriculum; by the use of posters, slogans and the like; and through extra-curricular agencies such as the

youth organizations. Whether the interpretation is “revisionist” or “dogmatist”, whether its presentation is subtle or crude, it is always there in some form and to some extent. (Grant, 1969, p. 91)

Renihan and Hromyk’s (1973) astute discussion of Soviet educational heritage explains in very practical terms that the successive Soviet leadership between the founding of the Soviet Union in 1917 and the 1970s understood that their underlying task was to industrially fast-track a society based on serfdom into a modern economic and political power. To do this, disguised within the cloak of socialist-versus-bourgeois mentality, technical and polytechnic trade education was prioritized over all other academic pursuits. Perhaps fifteen years ahead of their time, Renihan and Hromyk balanced this emphasis on understanding the industrial nature of Soviet education as an expression of perceived and ideologically induced necessity against the notion of historical memory. “A critique of Soviet education must have, as its basis, a knowledge of those above-mentioned aspects of its heritage together with an understanding of events through the twentieth century which [*sic*] shaped its development” (Renihan & Hromyk, 1973, p. 30). Their suggestion that, in the final analysis, the historical memory of a society is of great importance within any assessment of an educational endeavour is all the more profound considering the events that would take place thirteen years after publication.

Education within Perestroika and Glasnost’

With the deaths of Brezhnev, Andropov and Chernenko in rapid succession within the first few years of the 1980s, Gorbachev, a relatively unknown member of the

politburo, became First Secretary of the CPSU in 1985. As an economist, Gorbachev very quickly realized that the negative economic growth experienced during Brezhnev's tenure was simply unsustainable. Pushed by the belief that a reinvigoration of public spirit would increase production, Gorbachev's report to the twenty-seventh Congress of the CPSU in 1986 outlined two programs that would guide modern Soviet social, economic and political development into the twenty-first century (Gorbachev, 1986, 1988, 1989). Perestroika and glasnost' were seen as vital to the reinvigoration of socialism in the Soviet Union quite simply because the reality of the Soviet experience changed—the CPSU successfully eliminated class-struggle.

The social sphere encompasses the interests of classes and social groups, nations and nationalities, the relationship between society and the individual, the conditions of work and life, health and leisure. **It is the sphere in which the results of economic activity affecting the vital interests of the working people are realised, and the loftiest aims of socialism are carried into effect. It is the sphere in which the humanism of the socialist system, its qualitative difference from capitalism, is seen most distinctly and graphically.**

Socialism has eliminated the main source of social injustice—the exploitation of man by man, and inequality in relation to the means of production. (Gorbachev, 1986, p. 56, emphasis in original)

Such a drastic departure from seventy years of fundamental policy meant that new initiatives were required to account for the new reality. What was needed, in Gorbachev's eyes, was a critical re-examination of Soviet doctrine and practice. What this became was a critical re-examination of the society's historical memory. For all

fields of study, this meant an opening of opportunities for evaluation and the expression of doubt, cynicism, and criticism. It is during this time, therefore, that Soviet-published literature provides greater and more significant insight into the reality of Soviet education.

By credible published accounts, the Soviet education system was clearly a tool of the CPSU. Its operation was specifically designed to perpetuate the tenants of Marxist-Leninist values through the promotion of symbols (Zolin, 1992): the image of Lenin, the October Revolution, and the infallibility of the Party. In turn, the indoctrination of students through such symbols, coupled with insistence on educational “blind obedience” (Begisheva, 1992, p. 54), helped to legitimize the state and single-party rule between 1917 and 1985 (Brodinsky, 1992). In the Soviet classroom, “most teacher questions [began] with ‘what,’ ‘where,’ and ‘when.’ Few [began] with ‘why’ or ‘how’ or ask[ed] what students [thought]” (Brodinsky, 1992, p. 379; see also Krasovitskii, 1992); they were strictly dogmatic, where “one-third” of class time was dedicated to “repeating ...old rhetoric, glorifying the state, or denouncing capitalism” (Brodinsky, 1992, p. 380).

In 1986, Mikhail Gorbachev’s policy of perestroika included a mandatory questioning of the system and state at all levels. Education was not exempt, and Soviet pedagogical journals of the time included numerous examples of such questioning (Begisheva, 1992; Krasovitskii, 1992; Rogachev, 1992; Sokolova & Likhachev, 1992; Zolin, 1992)¹. Begisheva (1992) writes of the suppression of “students’ personality” and “teacher’s individuality” (p. 52):

How can there be any question of a creative approach to the effort if the educator

¹ Publication dates are those of English translation.

himself does not have the right to his own opinion, his own personal assessment? This is especially true of teachers of the humanities, who are told in advance which important figures of a given historical era they can mention, which writer's creative works they may acquaint the students with, and how many hours they can devote to this or that particular work or this or that historical event.

... Until recently, the state was concerned only for replacing the truth with the *ersatz*, patriotism with devotion to the authorities, consciousness of duty with blind obedience. Instead of discipline as a conscious necessity, we have established submission to circumstances over the course of many decades. Subordination against our will and reason has given rise to an inferiority complex, as reflected in apathy, inertia, boorishness, cruelty, and lies. We have only just begun to fight against these inevitable results of the suppression of personal freedom. But this struggle, unfortunately, has barely touched the children; adults continue to stuff them full of half-truths and innuendoes, which, probably, are worse than outright lying. (Begisheva, 1992, pp. 52-54)

During perestroika however, fear continued to loom as the Party's direction could change at any moment, returning the system to its *blind obedience*. Of interesting significance is the point that some of these pieces describe many ideas that educators in the West would have simply taken for granted. For example, Krasovitskii (1992) outlined the notion that listening to the requests and opinions of students does not imply that they should be acted upon: "[d]isagreement with the student collective is quite possible" (p. 81).

In August 1991 the system did change. The disintegration of the Soviet Union brought about changes on all levels as a result of political instability, economic fragility

and social polarization. For education, the change meant that teachers were left without a strict chain-of-command, curriculum, and in many cases, knowledge of “the truth” (Brodinsky, 1992, p. 379, see also p. 381) beyond the old Party line. Molodtsova (1996) concurred in her report that “[t]here used to be one curriculum, one syllabus, one textbook, one manual, one methodology. Today the schools offer the possibility of a choice, and pupils want that choice and strive for it” (p. 10). Be this as it may, problems resulting from the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its command economy have affected more tangible issues including arrears in teaching salaries and the development of private *for-fee* schools at the mandate of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which has set conditions for the development loan guarantees by Russian and other former Soviet republics (Kamyshev, 1998).

Fullan (1991) described the difficulty of understanding the present situation for students vis-à-vis change. He noted “[t]remendous numbers and diversity of students, combined with minimal research from the students’ point of view, make it impossible to do justice to the question of where students are” (p. 170). Fullan’s point is well taken. In fact, the majority of research done on students relates little to their opinions about the world around them, changing or not. Yet, their voice within the world is significant, if for no other reason than that dramatically portrayed by Bowles and Gintis (1976): “Why in a democratic society, should an individuals’ first real contact with a formal institution be so profoundly anti-democratic?” (pp. 250-251). Soviet education was anything but an exercise in democracy. Surely then, Bowles and Gintis’ question holds all the more true. What little understanding we have of student’s notions of change in schools, specifically

in the post-Soviet experience, came from statistical reports related to their personal career goals, and how these have changed since August 1991 (Rutkevich, 1994).

Summary

This review has outlined the predominant arguments of pertinent literature related to a study of adolescent student resilience within the context of social and political change. In its earliest sections, the concept of change was categorized as one of two types: drawn change or moment change. The paragraphs that followed provided an in-depth examination of resilience and resiliency theory, highlighting the work of Flach (1988), Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002). The concepts of change and resilience were then presented as complements to formulate the foundation of the theoretical framework for this thesis. Finally, the historical, political, philosophical and social contexts of the study were summarized through an assessment of relevant Soviet and western literature.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Research Design

This is a study of adolescent student experiences within the context of social, political and economic change. It provides a retrospective collection of student experiences (school-based, familial and social) during the final years of the Soviet Union, and after its collapse. The study employs a framework based upon student resilience and success as it seeks to better understand students' responses to change. Primarily, it is the purpose of this chapter to detail the research philosophy and methodology employed by the researcher. Second, this chapter outlines the nature of this study, and its operational research and analysis method and design. Finally, consideration is given to the trustworthiness of the results presented.

As this is a study of the experiential lived reality of a particular collection of individuals, a naturalistic and qualitative foundation provide the salient point of departure for research of this character (Schwandt, 1994). The intent of this study is not to evaluate the causes of social, political and change, nor is its point to discover these. Rather, it seeks to more fully understand the retrospective meaning made by individuals of their experiences during social, political and economic change. Van Manen (1997) and Schwandt (1994) remind the reader that the lived experience of a population is, by its very nature, the lived experience of many individuals—individuals who are as independent in their particular thought, circumstance, and environment as their society is diverse. Consistent with this rationale, such research requires a naturalistic and qualitative approach wherein the search for *experienced reality* is understood as multiple

and unique in its manifestation. A broad exploration of the relationship between the researcher and the researched, within the naturalistic paradigm, is the focus of this study.

Constructivist Orientation in Hermeneutic Phenomenology

There are simply no safe places from which a researcher may observe or write (Dimitriadis, 2001). In all instances and in all locations, the task of research brings with it a responsibility for accuracy and inductive and critical thought in order to impart an air of accountability. That accountability is not measured in tangible checks and balances—the “methodological rules” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 5), or “fixed signposts” (van Manen, 1997, p. 29). Rather, within the naturalistic and qualitative paradigm, one level of accountability is found in the researcher reflecting upon his own personal history, education, and perspective as it relates to those of the individuals observed.

A researcher’s goal is to avoid the objective notion that subjects of research in the behavioural and social sciences may be observed, interviewed or studied in any sterile and insulated way (Fine, 1994). In fact, the relationship between *subjects* (who are more appropriately referred to as *participants* within qualitative research) and *researcher* is both dialectic and didactic: “both interviewer and interviewee shape and are shaped by one another” (Tierney, 1993, p. 120). “Our obligation [as researchers] is to come clean..., meaning that we interrogate in our writings who *we* are as we coproduce [*sic*] the narratives we presume to ‘collect’” (Fine & Weis, 1998, p. 277). By understanding one’s own perspective and accounting for it frankly, openly and universally, the researcher may fulfil this *obligation* without a lengthy discussion of what less-

contemporary authors in qualitative research, like Hutchinson (1988), term *bracketing*—the suggestion that in understanding one’s perspective, one may remove it from the research all together. More recently, strong cases indirectly arguing the fallacy of bracketing underscore the vitality of *coming clean* (Dimitriadis, 2001; Fine, 1994; Fine & Weis, 1998; Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Lincoln, 1995; Mauthner & Doucet, 1998; Palys, 1997; Peshkin, 1988; Seidman, 1998; Tierney, 1993).

The act of *coming clean*, often called *standpoint epistemology* (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln, 1995), allows for a statement of *accountability* to the reader: the second level of accountability in any research endeavour (Kouritzan, in press; van Manen, 1997). It does not, however, provide a full picture of this relationship between researcher and reader. To only *come clean* is an oversimplification of the point repeated within the literature. More accurately, accountability is found in the researcher’s clear use of preliminary (contextual and circumstantial) and analytic induction such that a dialectic relationship is drawn between the researcher and the data (Palys, 1997; Schwandt, 1994). The result of such a critical thought process is a summary of data expressed through the clear use of written language and description. Special care is placed on the choice of words from a semantic and semiotic perspective (Holstein & Gubrium, 1994; Lutz, 1989, 1996) such that as little linguistic interpretation as possible is necessary by the readers (van Manen, 1997)—who themselves will reconstruct meaning based upon their own personal history, education, and perspective (Morf, 1998; von Glasersfeld, 1998).

The third level of accountability rests in the participants themselves. For phenomenological inquiry, and specifically that of the constructivist epistemology, the goal of research is the emic pursuit of “understanding the complex world of lived

experience from the point of view of those who lived it” (Schwandt, 1994).

The world of lived reality and situation-specific meanings that constitute the general object of investigation is thought to be constructed by social actors. That is, particular actors, in particular places, at particular times, fashion meaning out of events and phenomena through prolonged, complex processes of social interaction involving history, language, and action. (Schwandt, 1994, p. 118)

To appreciate the complexity of a participant’s world, one looks to the meaning and knowledge he or she make of the events in which he or she have been actors. One likewise pays deep attention to multiple historical, social, political and cultural interpretations surrounding the experience in question—a specific point to which the researcher sought clarity through his exploration of pertinent contextual literature within Chapter Two. Constructivists like von Glasersfeld further this argument and suggested “knowledge is not a particular kind of product (i.e., a representation) that exists independent of the knower, but an activity or process” (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127). Seidman (1998), an advocate of basic phenomenological research, suggested that meaning is made through the dialectic process of storytelling.

When people tell stories, they select details of their experience from their stream of consciousness. ...In order to give the details of their experience a beginning, middle, and end, people must reflect on their experience. It is this process of selecting constitutive details of experience, reflecting on them, giving them order, and thereby making sense of them that makes telling stories a meaning-making experience. (Seidman, 1998, p. 1)

Following Seidman’s reasoning, the collection of accountable meaning through first-hand

description of events and situations are most effectively elicited as a result of in-depth interview techniques consistent with hermeneutic phenomenology.

The purpose of in-depth interviewing is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to ‘evaluate’ as the term is normally used. ... At the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. (Seidman, 1998, p. 3)

The meaning made by the participant is of the utmost importance for the hermeneutic phenomenological researcher—it is the zenith of educated insight (van Manen, 1997). It provides the data that leads to a rich understanding of events in time. Through hermeneutic phenomenological techniques, this thesis does not attempt to develop a hypothesis by which the experiences of all adolescent students within social, political and change may be explained. Rather, its purpose is to develop insights through which the meaning of experiences of adolescent students under such circumstances may be more fully understood. It imparts upon the administrator an awareness of the complex personal experiences affected by decision-making within such contexts—in ways quantitative results simply cannot. In so doing, this thesis presents these experiences in an accountable way and for what they are: unique, ungeneralizable, and constructed through the dialectic interpretations, constructions and reconstructions of the participants, researcher and reader (Morf, 1998; van Manen, 1997; von Glasersfeld, 1998)—a *joint construction of meaning* (Mishler, 1986).

The following paragraphs will allow the researcher in this particular study to *come clean*, providing a standpoint from where his epistemology originates. In the sections that follow, the constructivist position provides a methodology framing the basic

phenomenological hermeneutic case study detailed within the research method and design.

Researcher Position

Complementing earlier discussion within Chapter One, a further description of my personal background and position, as a researcher and beyond this capacity, may be significant in the accountable presentation and analysis of data collected throughout this study. As a caucasian Canadian male graduate student in a Canadian university, my understanding of the events related to change in the Soviet Union between 1983 and 1993 developed over several years of research and study (both within Canadian and Ukrainian [post-Soviet] universities). I previously completed specialized research and study in the areas of post-Soviet societies in transition, Eastern European and Asian international relations, Marxist-Leninist political and economic thought, and studied several Eastern European languages. Though not native to Eastern Europe, I have travelled extensively within the region, affording me the opportunity to begin to understand personal experiences of the region's residents through conversations and friendships. I do not speak Russian or Ukrainian fluently, but do hold what I feel to be sufficient knowledge of both to feel comfortable in situations where these languages are employed as secondary references to English for linguistic clarification.

Epistemologically, I feel particularly comfortable within the naturalistic paradigm, however this was not always the case. Until relatively recently, I would have categorized myself as paradigmatic in epistemological persuasion (Bruner, 1985), believing that any suggestion of qualitative scholarship being equal in value to scientific

or paradigmatic scholarship would be completely indefensible. I no longer hold such an outlook—a constructivist interpretation of the origin of knowledge seems most consistent with my present beliefs. Recalling earlier mentioned work of von Glasersfeld (1998), van Manen (1997), Mishler (1986) and Seidman (1998), I would conclude that a social construction of knowledge ideally complements the search for made meaning through in-depth interview techniques. Having said this, I also strongly believe that the guidance and focus provided within a protocol based framework are pragmatically essential for constrained research circumstances. Furthermore, I consider resiliency theory to be a fortification of protocol boundaries, rather than a restriction on phenomenological inquiry.

Research Design

In order to obtain a greater understanding of the social nature of systemic transformation and its implications for the individual adolescent student, this study ultimately provides a basic hermeneutic phenomenological case study of the experiences of individual adolescent Soviet students within the social and political change and crises between 1986 and 1991 with respect to resilience and success.

Phenomenological Protocols

The context of this study provides a demarcation of participants and their experiences. In so doing, a particular protocol is defined. That is to say, by providing a boundary that concretely establishes what represents and does not represent the subject of analysis, the unit of analysis is understood as exclusive (Merriam, 1998; Palys, 1997;

Stake, 1994). Since the nature of this study is not to determine cause, but is to examine the experience of individuals within a social condition, one may find similarities within Stake's definition of an *intrinsic case study*.

In what we may call *intrinsic case study*, study is undertaken because one wants better understanding of this particular case. It is not undertaken primarily because the case represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because, in all its particularity..., this case itself is of interest. The researcher temporarily subordinates other curiosities so that the case may reveal its story. The purpose is not to come to understand some abstract construct or generic phenomenon[.]...The purpose is not theory building—though at other times the researcher may do just that. Study is undertaken because of intrinsic interest... (Stake, 1994, p. 237, emphasis in original)

Similarly, links may be drawn between the intent of this study and Merriam's (1998) discussion of *descriptive case study*.

Descriptive means that the end product of a case study is a rich, "thick" description of the phenomenon under study. Thick description is a term from anthropology and means the complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated. (Merriam, 1998, pp. 29-30, emphasis in original)

Both definitions invite a search for meaning within *lived experience*—the very nature of hermeneutic phenomenology (van Manen, 1997)—and provide opportunities for research to develop into illustrations of complexity, present hindsight as a relevant commentary for future endeavours, explore the influences of personality on experience, and explore the passage of time on experience (Merriam, 1998).

Basic Qualitative Study

Seidman (1998) presented a method of qualitative study based on phenomenology, incorporating elements of descriptive case study, and holding the *in-depth interview* as its principal tool of data collection. One may appropriately call his research method a *basic qualitative study*, as its phenomenological requirements are not as vigorous as those extolled by van Mannen (1997). Nevertheless, all phenomenologists share Seidman's fundamental concern: to provide "a structure ... that allows participants to reconstruct and reflect upon their experience within the context of their lives" (p. 15). Likewise, this study endeavours to provide similar structure, and pragmatically adopts a variation on Seidman's method.

Selecting the Participants

As has been discussed earlier, certain characteristics delimit the participants within this case study. All participants were initially contacted by the researcher or by participants themselves. Primary recruitment was done through personal acquaintances (academic colleagues, and former colleagues) and standard *snowball* methods wherein participants were asked for contact information of other possible and appropriate participants. Both male and female participants were asked to volunteer for this study. All participants were between the ages of twelve and sixteen years in 1991 (between the ages of twenty-four and twenty-eight at the time of study), and attended school within the Soviet education system (Russian SFSR, Ukrainian SSR, Byelorussian SSR, Uzbek SSR, Kazakh SSR, Georgian SSR, Azerbaijan SSR, Lithuanian SSR, Moldavian SSR, Latvian SSR, Kirghiz SSR, Tajik SSR, Armenian SSR, Turkmen SSR, and Estonian SSR) both

before and after that time. Age delimitations accounted for adolescence and school experience both prior to (during perestroika and glasnost') and after the political and social change of August-December 1991. Due to applicable regional linguistic deficiencies on the part of the researcher, all participants spoke English during the interviews. All participants lived within close proximity to the researcher at the time of study (Saskatchewan) and participated in one-on-one interviews with the researcher. Follow-up communication with participants was conducted through telephone conversations, personal contact or through asynchronous electronic mail messages. Introductory letters were sent to all participants prior to interviews.

Data Collection Techniques

Two techniques were employed in the collection of data. In all cases, however, a semi-structured conversational interview approach, wherein the dialectic search for meaning is found, provided the joint construction of meaning that was sought (Mishler, 1986). Seidman's (1998) method suggested that at least two in-depth phenomenological interviews be carried out (in its unmodified form, the first of these is presented over two separate occasions). In the first, the researcher and participant discuss the context of the experience and begin to illustrate its broader ecological context. In the second, meaning is jointly constructed through the researcher's facilitation of a dialectic conversation between the participants and their own memory (van Manen, 1997)—an elevation of Buber's (1923) *I and Thou* into *I and self*.

Semi-Structured Interview Approaches

As was stated earlier, all participants received an introductory letter (*Appendix B*) and were invited to participate in one-on-one interviews. Semi-structured interviews consisted of approximately 20 questions (*Appendix D*). A second interview was requested of all but one participant (*Appendix C*)—this included electronic mail, one-on-one or telephone communications. These interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed (Seidman, 1998). The researcher used the actual quotes of the participants in data analysis.

Participants who received electronic mail messages sent by the researcher were invited to reply to the researcher with their answers to questions and any comments they had. From the answers and comments provided by participants, the researcher constructed further questions for each participant on an individual basis, based on those from the list provided in Appendix D or related to themes that began to appear. All electronic communication was stored electronically within the researcher's personal electronic mail account—protected by username and password on the University of Saskatchewan's electronic mail server duke.usask.ca, the integrity of which is monitored by Security Services and the Division of Information Technology Services. At the completion of the study, all electronic communication was printed, and paper copies stored pursuant to Ethics Board directives. All electronic copies were destroyed immediately thereafter. The researcher used the actual quotes of the participants who engaged in electronic mail communication in data analysis.

Some participants were invited to participate in a second interview as common themes appeared to emerge from data collected. Questions were constructed as a result

of data collected within original interviews so that clarification could be made. Participation in a second interview remained completely voluntary. Second interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The researcher used the actual quotes of the participants from all interviews in data analysis.

Data Analysis

In his influential work *Thinking and Speech*, Vygotsky (1934) discussed the central link between consciousness, thought, understanding, belief and meaning, and an individual's spoken word.

If language is as ancient as consciousness itself, if language is consciousness that exists in practice for other people and therefore for myself, then it is not only the development of thought but the development of consciousness as a whole that is connected with the development of the word. (Vygotsky, 1934, p. 285)

He concluded by stating quite unambiguously, “*thinking and speech are the key to understanding the nature of human consciousness*” (p. 285, emphasis in original). The research presented in this thesis holds Vygotsky's words as a crucial underpinning and justification for the use of interviews as an instrument of data collection, and for the analysis of transcribed audio-recordings and electronic mail messages as the written form of participant thought and speech.

All audio-records of participant interviews were transcribed and concatenated with electronic mail message counterparts for analysis (Seidman, 1998). In the early stages, data was categorized, managed and organized according to participant. After participant transcript release approval was granted (discussed in Appendix E and within

paragraphs that follow), analysis began. Transcripts and electronic mail messages (hereafter collectively referred to as *transcripts*) were broken into manageable pieces of data based upon themes or trends that inductively emerged through a process of repeated reading, listening and reviewing by the researcher (Seidman, 1998). By using an inductive approach, Seidman suggests that the researcher should attack the data *tabula rasa*—disassociated from *a priori* theory, hypothesis or context. In an attempt to avoid a repetitive debate or innuendo of hypocrisy, bearing in mind earlier arguments regarding the somewhat similar notion of *bracketing*, the researcher prefers to conclude that such an approach is simply a *goal* within Seidman's basic qualitative method, rather than an *imperative*.

What emerged from such an approach to transcript analysis was a collection of important data *pieces*. Similar or repetitive topics found within importance pieces represented themes, which were in turn coded. Specialised *mind-map* software [Nova Mind 1.42] and *Text Analysis Markup System* software [TAMS Analyzer 2.16a] were used to manage and link pieces and codes such that themes were assisted in their emergence. Profiles of participants were also constructed to inform the researcher of similarities between participant experiences.

Linguistic Reflections

As all research participants were asked to interact during interviews and electronic mail messages in a language that is not their *mother-tongue*, special care was taken in the semantic and semiotic analysis of transcripts (Goldstein, 1995; Seidman, 1998; Vygotsky, 1934).

Establishing Trustworthiness

In the final analysis, the purpose of any study is to inform the reader. Fundamental to this is a discussion of *trustworthiness*, or the amount to which a reader is persuaded that the findings of a study are worthy of attention. In 1985, Lincoln and Guba embarked upon a comparative examination of paradigmatic and naturalistic semantics related to the question of trustworthiness. Within the quantitative paradigm, such concepts as *internal validity*, *external validity*, *reliability* and *objectivity* are sought as measurements against which a finding may be judged; these concepts become a value gage both individually and collectively. However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that the qualitative researcher holds a somewhat different view of data collection and evaluation.

[T]he point to be made is that criteria defined from one perspective may not be appropriate for judging actions taken from another perspective, just as, for example, it is not appropriate to judge Catholic dogma as wrong from the perspective of say, Lutheran presuppositions. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 293)

Thus, a conundrum is inherent within all naturalistic research: if no single understanding of an experienced reality is achievable, how can the importance or value of any interpretation of reality be considered noteworthy? As Lincoln and Guba (1985) concluded, the issue is in fact not as problematic as it may superficially appear.

Naturalistic Criteria: Credibility, Transferability and Confirmability

Credibility is presented as a replacement for the paradigmatic criterion of internal validity. Kincheloe and McLaren (1994) rejected any “notion of internal validity that is

based on the assumption that a tangible, knowable, cause-and-effect reality exists and that research descriptions are able to portray that reality accurately.” For Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility may be established in a number of ways which avoid Kincheloe and McLaren’s caution. For the pragmatic purposes of this particular study, however, credibility is primarily established through the use of two means: *triangulation* and *member checking*.

The technique of *triangulation* is [a] mode of improving the probability that findings and interpretations will be found credible. It seems likely that the term “triangulation” had its origins in the metaphor of *radio* triangulation, that is, determining the point of origin of a radio broadcast by using directional antennas set up at the two ends of a known baseline. By measuring the angle at which each of the antennas receives the most powerful signal, a triangle can be erected and solved, ... to pinpoint the source at the vertex of the triangle opposite the baseline. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 305, emphasis in original)

Janesick (1994) suggested five areas of that enable a triangulation in naturalistic research: data (“the use of a variety of data sources” [p. 214]), investigator (“the use of several different researchers or evaluators” [p. 215]), theory (“the use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data” [p. 215]), method (“the use of multiple methods to study a single problem” [p. 215]) and interdisciplinary triangulation (through the use of multiple contextual backgrounds to “inform our research processes, we may broaden our understanding of method and substance” [p. 215]). By employing multiple parts of these four, and more accurately, by employing multiple parts of many or all of these four, credibility is established. Within this study, contextual and historical records examined

within Chapter Two constitute one source of important data. Similarly, interview transcripts and electronic mail messages constitute another source of data. The use of two interview techniques (synchronous and asynchronous) provides triangulation of method. The construction of knowledge through social means implies a use of multiple perspectives in the interpretation of questions and their answers. Constructivists would argue that this constitutes theoretical, investigative and interdisciplinary triangulation.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) described *member checking* as the evaluation of “analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions” by those participants “from whom the data were originally collected” (p. 314). Within the context of this study, member checking was accomplished through the use of transcript release declarations (*see Appendix E*) and secondary interviews, conversations and short emailed queries. Participants were invited to comment upon findings, and were encouraged to define terms as their judgement and comfort permitted.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) expressed an air of caution surrounding the second naturalistic criterion of trustworthiness: *transferability*. As has been alluded to previously in this thesis, qualitative research does not favour the arguments of paradigmatic researchers that research must be generalizable. More simply stated, quantitative researchers argue that data and statistics collected from a sample population can be extrapolated to represent the views, opinions, attitudes, needs and wants of a much larger population. Statistically speaking, since greater accuracy in extrapolation is found in larger sample populations, qualitative research is criticized for its small numbers of participants. Missing from the argument, however, is an understanding that for qualitative and naturalistic researchers the question is not one of generalizability, but

rather one related to the importance of discovering detailed uniqueness among individual participants. To be sure, qualitative data are not generalizable in paradigmatic terms—but that is simply not the point, and naturalistic researchers endeavour to clearly make no such point. Having said this, the relative *thickness*, *intensity* and *profundity* of the data collected through naturalistic techniques, such as in-depth interviewing, are *transferable* in the sense that it enlightens interested decision-makers of the complexity to be found in human behaviour. In doing so, the decision-maker is made aware of potential complications, unforeseen effects and risks that are simply inaccessible through the study of statistical tables and graphs. The naturalistic researcher within this study holds fast the belief that in-depth interviewing techniques suggested by Seidman (1998) produced thick description of the socially-constructed meaning the study's participants made.

A third criterion recognized within naturalistic research is the concept of *confirmability*. To establish this, an audit is commonly performed in the later stages of research analysis to ensure that all data are accounted for within its final presentation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within and during this study, an *audit trail* was constructed through the cataloguing of participant data, analysis, findings, interpretations, antitheses and conclusions in a researcher journal.

Ethics

Ethical considerations were made pursuant to *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*, *University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Sciences Research*, and *University Council* directives. Details of ethical protocols are presented within Appendices A through F. Anonymity of all participants is

a goal of this research through the use of pseudonyms, however the researcher understands, and ensured that each participant understood, that anonymity cannot be guaranteed. Similarly, transcriptions of interviews were made available for participant review, edit, addition, omission and approval. Transcripts required an accompanying release signature (or declaration) of their respective participant before a complete analysis was performed (*see Appendix E*).

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the research design to be employed by the researcher within this study, and the epistemological foundations upon which both it and the researcher exist. Participants in this study participated in one-on-one interviews with the researcher; followed by further telephone, personal or electronic mail communication. Some participants were invited to participate in secondary interviews. Transcripts of all interviews and electronic mail messages were analysed and important points that emerge were clustered into themes. Chapter Four presents the data and thematic clusters that appear as a result of the research design outlined within this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation of the Data

This is a study of adolescent student experiences within the context of social, political and economic change. It provides a retrospective collection of student experiences (school-based, familial and social) during the final years of the Soviet Union, and after its collapse. The study employs a framework based upon student resilience and success as it seeks to better understand students' responses to change.

The purpose of this chapter is to present data collected and analysed through the one-on-one interviews discussed in the previous chapter. Data is presented in a manner that provides a picture of both the experiences of this study's participants and the methodological context in which their experiences were revisited. Thus, the data is personal and contextual, and by presenting autobiographical data in a biographical format, the pages that follow employ the candid commentary used by the study's participants to develop an understanding of their lives through their own words. Recalling Vygotsky (1934, p. 285, emphasis in original)—“*thinking and speech are the key to understanding the nature of human consciousness*”—one is reminded of the goal of research in social science: to understand the nature of human consciousness. Indeed, allowing participants themselves to construct windows into their own experiences is a strength of the qualitative process, and it is the intent of this chapter to act as a frame for such windows.

To this end, the pages that follow are organized in such a way as to academically examine the reflections of the participants. First, a brief review of the data collection and

analysis procedures presented; a compilation of participant profiles will follow. Finally, themes found within the data provide an outline for the presentation of interview-evoked material.

Data Collection

Five interviews were conducted with five individual participants: Oleksandr, Dmytro, Viktoriya, Ihor, and Lev [pseudonyms]. Participants were selected based upon their experience and age—each began their elementary, middle and upper years of schooling within the Soviet Union, and completed this schooling within a post-Soviet republic after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. Each participant was, at the time of study, no longer a permanent resident of his or her home former Soviet republic. Three participants were invited through direct contact with the researcher; two were invited through a snowball method. Four participants were male; one was female. Of the total five invited to participate, five participants accepted the invitation.

All interviews were conducted over a period of roughly two months between June 6 and August 3, 2003 with each following a semi-structured format. Each interview was audio-recorded and lasted between sixty and one hundred and five minutes long. All recordings were transcribed and coded using the Text Analysis Markup System [TAMS Analyzer 2.16a4] software application. Further, codes were analysed and clustered through the use of *mind-mapping* software [NovaMind 1.42] as themes began to emerge. Each transcript was analysed in its entirety rather than by studying answers to similar questions found within all five. The first three transcripts (those of Oleksandr, Dmytro and Viktoriya) were analysed prior to the fourth and fifth interviews (Ihor and Lev).

Themes that evolved were confirmed in secondary interviews with Oleksandr and Dmytro. The results of this data analysis are presented within sections of this chapter that follow.

Participants

Oleksandr

Born in 1975 in Kyiv, Oleksandr was the younger of two sons in what can easily be described as a strong family unit. His parents, and specifically his father's example had directed many choices in his life. Oleksandr comments in a memory:

I guess [I've learnt] motivation, not to be the joke [of a situation]. ... I guess I was taught by my parents what's right and what's wrong. My dad, he's been a very good example to me in work ethics, ...he hardly ever miss[es] any day of work. ...And always ever since I grew up, ... [I knew that] working, ...[was] what a man should do. (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

Hard work was a quality spanning Oleksandr's life. Early on he was recognized for his athletic talents in ice hockey and enrolled in a specialized school where his dedication to a team was not only permitted, but also strongly supported. The regimen of an athletic career at such an early age yielded him numerous successes, including a position on the Ukrainian National Junior Men's Hockey team for two Junior World Championships, and a position within the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League. All of this occurred, while *en route* toward first graduating from school, and then attending

university in Ukraine and Canada. In the years following his hockey career, Oleksandr's discipline enabled him to complete a university degree in Computer Science.

School Life

Oleksandr's experience in school began in early. In the Soviet Union, formal education began at the age of seven, but before entering school there were two structured educational options for children. The first of these was known as ясли [yasli], a state organized preschool accommodating children from infancy through the age of three. This was followed by a kindergarten, or детские садики [detskie sadiki], which appeared analogous to western kindergartens, but was available for three years instead of one (Grant, 1969; Sweeney, 1993). Neither yasli nor kindergarten were mandatory for each child. However, most children, including Oleksandr, attended one if not both for varying periods of time. Oleksandr recalled: "There was excellent preschool."

In 1982, Oleksandr entered the first grade, and it was at this time that he began playing hockey. He admitted that his memories of the earlier years of school were not vividly clear, but several events and circumstances remained within his consciousness. Oleksandr explains, "[T]he thing is, we would sit in that class, we wouldn't travel—rarely ever, just for phys. ed. classes and music classes—and we would have the same teacher for all subjects, for the first through third grade." Having the same teacher for every class in the first three years of school was a typical experience for children in the Soviet Union at that time, as will be shown.

He was not particularly interested in languages, but science, math, algebra, geometry and physical education held his academic attention. His dedication to hockey

seemed to overshadow many of his early school-based memories, but throughout his time in school, Oleksandr recalled the importance of the example his father displayed: “working, it’s what a man should do.” Working, despite the expectation that seemed to follow him and his team mates.

Yeah, you have to understand that I was in a sports class, so obtaining a good grades it would be like... it was more [the] inverse. So we weren’t encouraged to get a good grade.

... if you win the game you’ll get a good grade (laughter), yeah, but the thing is... most of my class, I think when they were graduating it was like, “Oh, I hardly passed and I didn’t care.” And to be honest, you had to screw up really big back then to fail a grade.

... Yeah, ... it was fairly hard to fail a grade. (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

The experiences Oleksandr had within a special class of hockey team mates were intriguing. This was partially because of the weight placed on sportive success over academic success, and partially because of his response to such a regime. For Oleksandr, the example of his father and his value of working hard seemed to mean that for him, both sportive success and academic success were equally important in his life. This was despite the expectation or the lack of “encouragement to get a good grade” he described.

In fact, he did achieve many good grades, and was proud of them. During the interview, Oleksandr retrieved his final school report card from a file folder. Presenting it to me, I read through the Russian handwriting outlining grades of fours and fives out of five in all subjects.

Russian language, Russian literature, Ukrainian language and literature, other language... I was taking English, but... words that [I] didn't know... [I] develop[ed] nothing. Write and say my name, just so that they knew after four years how I work[ed].

... [We had classes in] Algebra, Geometry, something like I.T. [information technology] here [in Canada]—like Information Processing—Geography, Biology, Physics, Astronomy, Chemistry, World History, Ukraine's History, Physical Culture, ... [and we] took [a class] in high school, ... that prepares you for better participation in the army. ... [T]hey teach you about what to do during an evacuation so that when [a] bomb explodes or the like...

... I wouldn't say it was really militia, ...

... militia's more... organized ... it's an organized class [where] we went [to] shooting ranges, we slept when, like whenever with our twenty-tuos. (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

In the Soviet and post-Soviet school systems, grades were expressed as a number between one and five, where five was roughly equivalent to one hundred percent. Oleksandr suggested that a grade of four would be "...like around seventy, seventy-five [percent]." He recalled a story surrounding his experience with academic success.

And the thing is most of the finals were oral examination, so you go with [a] ticket and you answer the question. So I guess my biggest success was one day and I'm through three exams in the middle like of morning, and [the]... last exam

I came in and I said, “well... I will not complete this exam today, here is my permission to do all exams earlier.”

And teacher said, “Well I have another exam, it’s [in] about twenty minutes.” I said, “well, it’s more than enough [time], give me my ticket... You got the ticket? I’m ready...”

“Well, okay,” [the teacher continued] “you have ten minutes [to prepare].” After the ten minutes, I [gave my answer].

“Well, due to you not going through preparation at all, I’ll give you whatever mark, ...” [the teacher explained]. She gave me a four, so it’s like around seventy, seventy-five... [She] said, “I’ll give you that mark because you didn’t prepare. You, you just looked at the question and you answered.”

So, that was my third exam for the day and I was done. So success would be... you didn’t have to worry about the exams for the rest of the month. So by the end of May you will be finished your exams and have ... one month to just relax. And the rest of your group may still go for exams ‘til [the] end of June. (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

What seemed confusing about the nature of Oleksandr’s story was its somewhat flippant response to academics. On one hand, he made references throughout the interview to academic success being an important success in his life: “[s]uccess. I guess graduating, that was success,” and when queried about current experiences with success he responded, “[w]ell I’m happy to get my degree now.” Yet, he also notes through the previous story that success came easily academically, or perhaps that a great deal of

latitude was given to Oleksandr by some of his teachers: he was allowed to take three oral final exams one month before his classmates, and was then graded, as he described it, on a truncated preparation time rather than on the answer he provided. Other examples of this flippancy appeared in a story about the encouragement he received from teachers when he did well at school.

So teachers they would... encourage saying, “Well yeah, you did well,” ... and you’re rewarded with your marks but marks ... obviously they mean nothing and thing is, that there was greater more emphasis [on marks] than in here [in Canada] because they would have four quarters [throughout the year], so you would have your [report] card... for parents [four times per year] and... I never would give them to my parents... [I would think], “whatever,” and “you haven’t heard anything from school so... it must be good” (chuckles). (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

Oleksandr seemed to place meaning on academic success, and suggested that more emphasis was placed on academic standing in his experience in the Soviet Union than during his experience in Canada. Yet, for him, marks “obviously ... mean nothing.” Perhaps the system weighted academic success, and it was important for him to see himself as successful in academics. Perhaps he didn’t need to worry about academics because of the allowances given to talented athletes within the Soviet system (Clark, 1978; Howell, 1975; Jefferies, 1987; Maetozo, 1978; Malina, 1981).

System Change

Oleksandr, like other participants, was very quick to respond to the question: what did the changes that took place during perestroika, glasnost and 1991 mean to you? “Nothing.” Oleksandr responded, rebuilding the events of August 1991 in his mind.

[We were j]ust kids... kids... and [with] the kid’s innocent eyes, ... when the putsch happened and I...

... Well, see being a kid, [I] was misled by the bribe that they [the coup conspirators] offered, saying, “oh, everybody in high school or in school would be given [a] free uniform, they would be given free lunches” and blah, blah, blah, and... Well, being a kid, we just said, “well that’s great, sounds good.” Like, [I] was just blinded by the offers and, sure enough, you just say, “ah, I don’t care,” but [the] thing is, you don’t see the big picture because... we weren’t kind of taught to think in a big picture. And [you think], “okay, sounds good, I will take it” (chuckles). So I didn’t really form an opinion on that event ‘til after. (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

The opinion Oleksandr formed thus followed, “and then I figured, well that [change] was the... probably the most... the biggest good thing that happened there [in the Soviet Union] because, like if that didn’t happen, I wouldn’t be here now (chuckles).”

In fact, the change did seem to affect him and his family in a number of ways that were sometimes difficult.

And that was probably the biggest change and... Well, most of the changes were kind of financially [driven] because inflation rate went up right away.

My brother is [working at the] university, I guess [as] a full professor, but he's teaching phys. ed. at Kyiv Polytechnic Institute. Yeah, there were ... sometimes ... they weren't paid for two or three months. (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

When asked how the financial difficulties affected him directly, Olkesandr explained his own personal situation was actually rather lucky.

Well the thing is, attending at university we were given money by [the] university...

Yeah, stipend. So, if you're... C average you would get [a] lower grade [of stipend]. If you were B average you will get higher. If you are A average, ... you'll get more money, we'll say per month. And I don't know how it was subsidized, I guess through government or... I still don't know, but that was part of the income. Well there was income that [we] would travel [with] and [we] were given little bit by our hockey team, just like spending money. ... And I just said that doctors were selling stuff. Basically there were people, they would start... "interpreneers?" No...

Entrepreneurs. Oh, it's kind of entrepreneurs[hip] because it's not really businesses. [More] like buy, sell. You don't produce anything so... (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

Oleksandr confirmed that this primitive entrepreneurship flourished within the years immediately following the collapse of the Soviet Union. The idea was relatively simple. One travelled to a location where a variety of products (panty-hose, lipstick,

clothing, trinkets, etc.) could be bought inexpensively, then, travelled to a second location where these products would sell for a better price. Oleksandr went on to explain his own personal experience as an entrepreneur when he bought products in Ukraine and exported them to Poland for resale.

Turkey or Poland or... or you go vice versa, you buy it in Ukraine for really cheap, you take it to Poland and you sell it ... you came back with twice of your money, ... most of my hockey team did it and it wasn't me. ...

[W]e didn't have to go stay on a bazaar. Basically [customers] would come to our rooms and ask us if we have anything for sale. I guess we ... built up [a] reputation. ... So then sometimes the guys [who] were actually playing in that town, they would play hockey there for [money]... I guess [the] market opened up for all hockey players, and some of them just went to Poland or some other places to play hockey because they were getting paid a little bit more than, well... way more than they would be getting paid in Ukraine (chuckles). So, they went there to play for a year or two. So, they would invite our team, and sometimes even saying, "okay, what do you want me to bring?" So basically [we would] bring them [something] like case of vodka. When you buy it, I don't know, I can't remember...

[S]o you can get [about] five bottles [of vodka] for a dollar. ... [You] take it [to Poland], they give you at least two... dollars for [one bottle], you know? Because you go to any liquor store [in Poland and] it's like five [dollars] or whatever. I can't exactly remember the price of them.

[L]ots of people would dig into it and say, “well, there’s an opportunity to make some money.” So basically that was the reason why you see doctors standing [at a] bazaar ... selling stuff because they can’t make a living, a decent living from what they’re doing, on daily basis. And I don’t blame them. ... [E]verybody would do the same to survive (chuckles). (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

Money became more a part of Oleksandr’s life. He recalled a time when he was able to take skills he had learned as a hobbyist in electronics and computers as a child and use them to his advantage as a teenager.

Yeah, ... more [or] less... like being eighteen, nineteen, twenty, ... you want extra money and ... why wouldn’t you do something to make it. So... the skills that they obtain while fooling around with electronics, ...[can be] put ... to use because there are some people who require it and they will be willing to pay for it. So they say, “okay, here is... assemble this lot [of] computers”—and it wasn’t... fine labour because they have to assemble it with soldering gun—so, “so assemble... assemble this one so I’ll sell them.” So, basically we buy parts, buy old stuff really, you just assemble them and you... basically tune [them up] so they will still work, and then they sell them. [It was] ... another source of income I guess (chuckles). (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

It is this source of income that further demonstrates a youth’s resourcefulness in a changing society.

Resilience and Success

Oleksandr used the verb “to recover” while exploring the idea of resilience, and while assessing his own life through this lens. In response to the questions, “Do you think that you are resilient? Do you think that you are able to recover very quickly from small or large problems?” Oleksandr tried to explain his thoughts.

Not very quickly but able to recover (chuckles).

... Because, ... there's lots of stresses in your life and you just have to separate this from [the] people that you love. ... So, why am I able to recover? I guess [I've learnt] motivation, not to be the joke [of a situation]. I guess I was taught by my parents what's right and what's wrong. My dad, he's been [a] very good example to me in work ethics, so he hardly ever miss any day of work. ... And always, ever since I grew up, ... working, it's what [a] man should do (chuckles). And I guess... I do recover because sooner or later everything's going to be forgotten—you have to move on. And basically, ... I see kind of similarities in hockey, and because you never give up. ... [W]e played one game and we were losing and coach even gave up on us. Then one guy who didn't play ... said, “okay, for each goal I [will] give a certain amount of alcohol,” he said actually *money*, but in my head at that time it was a stress. I said, “okay, how many bottles will it buy?” So we were losing [the] game, and [the] goalie gave up on us, and people said, “oh, screw that,” or told [us that] we're never going to win ... and my words were before we went on ice: “okay, get your money ready.” ... [W]e [won] the freakin' game, [and]... just about bankrupt that guy (laughter) in a matter of one period. ... So, that's pretty much [what it] was like, why I didn't

want to give up. ... [W]hy I didn't want to look at the situation from a negative perspective. I try to always look at it [from a] positive perspective. And there's one good quote I heard from [an]other guy, "I didn't fail hundred times; I just found ... [a] hundred ways of not doing it."

So why... it's actually a good question, why... why am I able to recover? Because [I'm the]... strong silent type. Might not be so silent. I just... didn't want to... [end] up on the street. ... Actually, I have seen examples of some other guys from the [hockey] team, older guys, they can't go on the ice without having shot[s] of alcohol, half a bottle, at least. ... [T]hat's why (laughter), ... I consider them to be incomplete, like losers. And the thing is, they were talented guys, but if they would put some more effort [into their] work, they can make it far, but... [the] thing is, their goals in life were... none, I guess (chuckles). And [it's] probably having goals that would help you recover—knowing what you want. (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

After the initial interview, Oleksandr made some clarifications about his resilience and success. In an email, he recalled,

... ever since I was a kid I was encouraged to communicate with others and work together as a team (Ex. *zvezdochka* [звездочка actually a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian, this word in its Russian form literally translates as "little stars;" this was the organization of the *Октябрюта* / *Oktyabryata* or *Children of the October* (a Soviet youth group, of sorts) [that broke students] into groups of five students within their classrooms] in school, line and team mates in hockey). May be this

paid [*sic*] a big role in getting me to the place where I am now, I do not know.

(Oleksandr, electronic communication, July 17, 2003)

Oleksandr saw himself as a successful individual, and being “where [he was] now” seemed part of his understanding of success.

Dmytro

Dmytro was born in the southwestern Ukrainian city of Chernivtsi. He was the youngest of three children by several years. His parents and older siblings had experienced difficulty fitting into the atheist nature of Soviet society on account of their religious convictions. Dmytro recalled the difficulties his family endured.

... [I]t was really hard to achieve something if you are a Christian. My mom and my dad were fired about two or three times from different jobs just because... they were doing fine and they were good workers but they didn't belong to that society and that's why ... they had to leave [those jobs].

... I can look at my sister's success and she was very good, ... she is smart and she had a perfect score at school, but at the last exam in Biology she was [told], “you don't believe in evolution so you answered everything about evolution, ... you know the material but you don't believe in it so we put you poor, and [gave] you B instead of A.” And that spoiled her... GPA, and she didn't get a perfect score. ... And then she couldn't enter the university because she wasn't a member of the Komsomol, so she had to take part-time classes and... Well, she became successful but it happened after the independence. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

The Komsomol [Комсомол (an abbreviation of Всесоюзный Ленинский Коммунистический Союз Молодежи or the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League)] was the third echelon of Soviet youth organizations, following the *Oktyabryata* and the *Pioneers*. Membership in this organization was an expectation for promising university students (Grant, 1969; Sweeney, 1993). When Dmytro's sister refused to join, her academic success was stymied. Luckily for Dmytro, such a decision regarding membership was never an issue for him as the Komsomol disbanded before he left the *Pioneers*.

Since the change, both of Dmytro's siblings immigrated to Canada, and his father became a minister in their church at home in Ukraine. Dmytro was a graduate student in a Canadian university at the time of the study.

School Life

Painting a broad picture of his academic career, Dmytro described his education from grade one through eleven.

Well I started my school at the age of seven. That was 1986. I went to school #9, it was called by numbers at that time. So that was a school with English and German languages, that was a specialized school in languages and also I took Latin after that. First three [years of] classes were elementary school and after that I went to grade five because I skipped grade four which was only for pupils that went to school at the age of six. So they had to study eleven years and other

children have to study only ten years. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

As a student, the young Dmytro was academically exceptional. As he grew older, other passions began to vie for his time.

Well, my grade point average at that time was 100% ... I did well in all ... class at that time. So I didn't have any troubles.

... Interviewer: ... You said in the beginning you had 100% all the way through, what happened after that?

(Laughter) I don't know, I guess it's just secondary school, because ... going [into the] senior grades you get more assignments and you get distracted by... playing sports and going out with friends and doing something else and so you have less time for your studies, it... probably ... started in grade five or six.

... [Y]ou could sign up for any team you wanted, and then [there were] tryouts.

... They looked at your ... marks and if your marks were okay in phys. ed. ... they tried to put you in some teams.

... [U]sually you stayed with the same team that you started with at grade seven or six.

Interviewer: So was there a group of friends that were always moving together, always the same people going through on teams?

Well ... part of the team was the same during all the grades, from secondary school to high school, but ... when I went to grade six our school

became Gymnasias [an academically directed school similar to a Gymnasium in the German school system], and they split the classes so we had three different classes, and they chose the best people into [class] A, and then the kids that were doing okay they were put to [class] B, and then all the rest were put to [class] C.

... [M]y ... best school friend was in the same [sports] team with me for about... seven years. ... [A]nd my other best friend did not participate but he was participating in different clubs and other activities. He was kind of [a] nerd; he wasn't into sports very much. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

As can be seen, Dmytro possessed a network of friends that was not limited solely to sports or to school. Dmytro shared with Oleksandr the experience of being in the care of one teacher for the first three years of his school life. He spoke very fondly of this teacher, and was able to build an understanding in his mind of why he enjoyed his experience with her.

[W]hen I was young, when I was little, ... I liked my first teacher, ... I had one teacher for all subjects.

And she was really good, ... really understanding, and ... very kind, and sometimes ... strict but I guess she had to be like that [with] 30 kids in one class and everybody screams and shouts and fights.

... *Interviewer: Can you tell me something about a teacher that you didn't like?*

Well I didn't like some teachers that were there only for about half a year, because in grade three I had three English teachers during the year. So they just

came for two months and then they didn't like the... way they were treated there or I don't know. [M]aybe they got a low salary there or something else, ... they left after two months. And then another teacher came and... he started making new rules and kids didn't like that because ... they were used to the other teacher. And then that teacher left by... New Year, so when we came after winter break we had a new teacher. And began the same story, that's why we didn't like some of the teachers.

... [W]e used to have [just] one teacher for Math, Literature, Languages, but English was taught by different teachers. And those English teachers used to change very often, so... compar[ed] to the teacher that was always with us, they ... came in for few hours a day, maybe a week, and then we [wouldn't] seen them. That's why we didn't have very close relationship with them. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

For Dmytro, the relationship he had with a teacher was positive when there was an opportunity for it to grow—especially in the earlier years. As he grew older, and as the number of teachers with whom he was in contact likewise grew, Dmytro's understanding of positive teacher-student relationships changed in some ways. Interestingly, however, some aspects of it also remained the same.

[W]e had lots of new teachers, and ... every teacher had their own subject, so we didn't have a teacher that taught five or six subjects. But there was one teacher ... we were supposed to be his class. We were assigned to him.

Interviewer: Kind of like a homeroom teacher here?

Yeah. And he was teaching math, ... algebra, geometry, and later higher math. But other teachers, like [the] chemistry [and], music teacher[s] ... it depended on the[ir] personality. If kids liked the [teacher's] personality, they would like the teacher.

[W]e didn't like physics teacher because she was very mean to children and... well, it seemed to us at that time. She was very strict.

Interviewer: Tell me about that. Can you give me an example?

[T]here was a favouritism in that class. She had a few kids that were doing really well and she used to ask them [questions], and in case somebody else didn't know the answer, then she would always ask those [favoured kids]. And then... she would say, "oh you see, these kids know everything and you don't, and you are stupid," and blah, blah, blah. So that's why we didn't like it.

Interviewer: What about teachers that you really liked?

... Yes, it was this math... teacher and then we had... Russian Literature and Ukrainian Literature and Language teachers that were really good and... even now, ... when I went back home I saw them and we met and we chatted and we talked for about two hours, and we were like friends. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

At the time, favouritism was a problem that Dmytro linked with trust. He recalled an experience in school where he felt that trust was missing. He explained how students regarded mistrust as a mistreatment by teachers, and how *success* seemed to be a redemption of sorts.

[W]hen they would ask some questions and you didn't know the answer though you studied at home, and ... you read about [the questions] but were just too worried or something, and something happened during ... school and you weren't quite prepared for the class. And [the teacher] said, "okay, you didn't read anything at home so I[ll give] you [an] F." And you said, "no, I read it, so can I come and redo this assignment?" or whatever, and said, "no, because you didn't prepare for this class so we won't let you."

I think there was, yeah, favouritism. Some people or some teachers used to share their points of views with other teachers, and other teachers didn't like some of the kids just because one of the teachers didn't like him or her. ... [A]nd then they start putting Fs and Ds, though that person was okay and he was studying okay. ...[J]ust because of the dislike of one teacher.

... Interviewer: Was there anything the students could do at that time?

They could improve with their marks. And I know one that ... used to have all Cs, in grade six, seven and eight, and then he started learning computers. ... And he graduated from school with honours and now he's one of the vice-presidents of a big bank. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

Interestingly, it seems that no matter where in the world one goes, those who study computers tend to be successful later on in life.

System Change

Dmytro began to discuss the situation that prevailed at his school in September

1991, ten days after the coup.

Well it was connected with Communist Party. ... [S]uddenly over a period of two or three weeks, school got rid of all that emblems and red flags and all this stuff that was connected with Communist Party. So that was really obvious that something was really going on. And we didn't celebrate Lenin's birthdays, different anniversaries; [we] quit doing that. So, that was a big change. And I guess teachers became more worried about their future too, ... and it reflected on us as students.

We became worried too, because it was a very turbulent time for Ukraine, and especially with economy going down, and also... inflation and all [the] other stuff that was going on.

[W]e used to have [to] stand with... Lenin's... bust, yeah. And also we had to be on duty, so ...we had to stand there for about two hours a day, two people from each class, we had the line-up going on from one class to another ... from two to four [o'clock], two people from our class had to stand by that [bust].

Interviewer: Is that right? (Dmytro concurs) Wow. And you went and stood?

I had no choice.

Interviewer: What did it mean anything to you?

No, nothing, just getting tired of standing... No, it was really boring and you couldn't talk to anybody, you had to salute to others and just stand like that for two hours. So ... your hand and arm got sore.

History... books changed because ... back in old times ... you used to have stories about ... Communist Party activists. Now we didn't have any stories about them, we didn't learn about Lenin's life story, we didn't read the books that were written by Soviet authors. History was taught differently, especially about second World War, and other things that were going on during Soviet times—like famines and concentration camps and Siberia, when people were sent to Siberia for two or three years. So, I knew that before but I never learned about that in school. I learned about that from my mom and my grandma. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

Within five months of the coup, Ukraine had taken its independence from the Soviet Union. Dmytro's personal experience with regard to independence was one of pride, which was evident as he discussed his new-found nationality.

I was too little to realize that something happened, but I suddenly became proud of being Ukrainian.

Interviewer: Were you proud of being Ukrainian before?

Yeah, I was proud, but you couldn't show it. So you couldn't say I'm Ukrainian ... [W]e changed our flag colours and we changed our flag and we changed the anthem, and suddenly everything Ukrainian became very popular.

Interviewer: What was the feeling like? Was it just pride? Can you tell me a story about realizing your Ukrainianness?

Oh yeah, because... one thing that showed [was] that the nation became proud of themselves, of being Ukrainian as being separate from Russia which

didn't happen for a long time, and they were dependent [on] everything that Russia had, like electricity, gas, natural gas, and oil, but then they started developing their own economy, though it was really slow. And it is still slow. But you could see the change in... people. They were allowed to say things that they weren't allowed to say before, and talk about things that they would never dare to talk about. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

Dmytro also discussed the importance of the system opening up as an opportunity for growth, and perhaps even success.

Well, I guess lots of new opportunities that were open to not only students but to people, entrepreneurship and also universities, lots of new universities and higher education institutions that were opened at that time. And people wanted to get good education, so they went ... to the universities and institutes and then they got better professions than they would get during the Soviet times..., because in order to be successful in the Soviet times you just had to be either a member of Communist Party or be a very good Komsomolets' [Комсомолец (a member of the Komsomol)], or ... participate in different activities that would allow you to become successful later. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

To clarify this point further, a follow up email was sent to Dmytro. In the email the question was asked whether or not he believed that a strong optimistic *Zeitgeist*—a social opinion that the future was bright and full of opportunity—was present in the time immediately following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

I think that's what happened at that time, everybody thought thing would be better immediately. Actually, what you described is exactly what I felt (and I guess a lot of people too, but not all). But even those who didn't believe it was gonna get better, at least hoped for that. (Dmytro, electronic communication, August 3, 2003)

Dmytro's experiences at the genesis of the post-Soviet era are significant because they depict a relationship between an environment of optimism—as a result of social perceptions of opportunity—and, as will be show, an environment of resilience in the face of change.

Resilience and Success

Through the course of the interview, Dmytro contemplated the nature of success both before and after the change. He then evaluated his own life and determined the nature of his success, and from where he believed his own personal resilience came. Finally, he attempted to compare his post-change success with what he thought his success might have been had the system not changed.

Reflecting on his early years in school, almost instinctively Dmytro suggested that success was based on one thing and one thing only, “[j]ust marks”. When asked about success at this age for children outside of school, he had this to say.

Well, going to musical school, going to art school and going to different... having lots of friends, and ... being a good ... child ... for your parents, so that was success. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

When reflecting upon the final years in school, grade ten and eleven and after the system change, Dmytro balanced his personal understanding of success against that of the post-socialist society.

I guess good achievements at school [are important] anyway. Yeah, because grade 10 and 11 you know that you're going to go somewhere else and you're going to go to university or institute, so you have to show good marks and study well in order to be able to enter the university.

Interviewer: ...[I]n a lot of cases as you grow older, certainly here, the experience was that having a lot of money is a way of showing that you've been successful, and that ... you're not successful unless you have a lot of money.

Well it was the same in Ukraine. ... But ... people looked at you as if you were successful only if your parents had money. So... because it was very hard for high school students to get a job somewhere, we don't have ... part-time jobs or summer jobs. Now ... it's changed.

Students can [now] go and work at the market, or ... in the stores during the summer or they can go [in]to construction for some guys that can really do hard work. ... [A]t that time there were no opportunities at all.

Interviewer: Is it now a good thing?

I guess yes, but when students work a lot ... their achievements at school can get lower and lower and it can influence their future.

Interviewer: What about participation in extra curricular activities?

Does that, in your mind, tend to help people and their achievements in school?

I guess yes, if you were doing some music stuff with orchestras or with bands, or playing in teams again with sports, so it was really successful for other[students], so that [people] could see that you're doing something else, other than school. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

Dmytro concluded that the social definition of success had changed, and that its change was linked to the difference in social control held by the government.

I guess [the] definition *has* changed. Being successful didn't mean just ... to become a member of Soviet, the Communist Party, and go and work as the head of some big company or head of the... something. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

After a discussion related to the meaning of resilience, Dmytro was asked about his own resilience, and if he believed that he was a resilient individual. He tried to explain why he was resilient and from where his support came throughout his life. He did not see successes as *achievements*, but rather as *experiences* that had given him opportunities to grow as an individual.

Interviewer: [Reflecting upon] your life, do you think that you were a resilient individual?

I guess so.

Interviewer: Can you tell me why it is that you feel so?

Oh, I guess support of my parents and my friends, and also my teachers helped me to cope with difficulties that I had, and just grow every time after that. And also at the university, ...I guess being a very persistent person helped me to... grow. I hope it's a growth, because I haven't stayed at the same level after high school or university, so I have this feeling that I want... I need to grow more and more, so that's this persistency, ... the person that is not very limited in his or her points of views, just looking at things with different perspectives and then trying to analyze—and that's why I guess that helped me.

Interviewer: Where did you learn that?

From my parents, and also from my teachers... some of my teachers.

... Well I guess it was [the] literature teacher because when we used to analyze some pieces of literature, some stories, some novels, they used to ask students about their points of views. And everybody... and they said there's no wrong points of view, you just add to a general point of view that's about that thing in the novel so they used to teach us that you can't be wrong about something, if it's your point of view, unless it's really far from being true it is wrong. But if you will get something and then your fellow student looks at it differently ... it doesn't have to be a conflict between you, you just have to find a consensus, and find a point of view that's between that.

I guess it was grade nine, ten, eleven, so it was during the [independence time]...

Interviewer: What about before that? Do you think that that would have been the case?

I guess we didn't have that much of a choice at that time. There was one generally accepted opinion and you had to stick to that opinion, and do not move aside.

Interviewer: Is that because you were young? Or is that because that was the nature of school at that time?

I guess both. And even older students, older people, had to think ... the way the Communist Party wanted us to think. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

During this first interview with Dmytro, a question was asked that, upon reflection, seems out of place and even odd within the transcripts. His response, however, shed deeper light on Dmytro's understanding of the origin of resilience.

Interviewer: Do you consider yourself lucky?

I'm growing not only personally but professionally. ... I see that... I can't say I'm lucky, but I guess God helps me a lot. So in my faith, and ... my parents also help me for that. So [I guess] ... I can say that I'm lucky. (Dmytro, personal communication, June 17, 2003)

Finally, Dmytro reflected upon the hypothetical situation of his own success had the system not changed. He commented that, "well, I can say, maybe [I would be successful], but not to the degree that I'm successful now." He then considered the experiences of his parents and siblings outlined earlier. They had been limited in their success on account of the intolerance of religious convictions by the state and social apparatus.

Viktoriya

Viktoriya, like Dmytro, was born and raised in Chernivtsi, Ukraine. Viktoriya was the eldest of two sisters, and was born in 1975. Her mother worked in the yasli that Viktoriya attended.

Yasli? Well, I did [attend yasli]. ... I was there, but just for... not all the four, five years. The last year before ... I started my elementary school I was at home. I studied at home—I didn't go to kindergarten. But yeah, I went to yasli and (chuckles) that kind of kid stuff. (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

Viktoriya had very fond memories of her education. The interview probed deeply into her experiences, and queried why those experiences were so fond. Throughout, Viktoriya's reflections were reminiscent of the dialogue described by van Manen (1997), in which participants engage themselves. She calmly contemplated her own experiences dialectically. It is during this time of dialogic-thought that many social-systemic structures present in the experiences of Soviet children were revealed and examined within the context of success and resilience.

School Life

Well, I went to one school for ten years. I started in 1982, and it was just regular school until grade seven—and then they started kind of experimenting and in grade seven ... our class was specialized with math and physics. But I didn't like that, and [the] next year I switched to the humanities class, specializing in

languages and history. And that was ... until the end of the school, I was in that class. And then [I] ... started my university, 1992, and finished 1997, that's it. (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

In fact, there was more to Viktoriya's experience than was let on in the passage above. Viktoriya was an extremely diligent student. She recalled her excitement at entering the first grade in 1982.

Oh yes, I was very excited. I wanted to go to school actually when I was six, but then I had a surgery during the summer so I couldn't go and that's why I stayed at home. But I was... a very diligent student (chuckles), very, yeah, excited about school and my parents taught me to read ... when I was three years old and... three-and-a-half, I was writing, so... I was kind of among the top students. Really liked school, and my parents, you know, they... I guess that's... their kind of fault. They instilled that in me, that I like to read, I couldn't wait to go to school, didn't want to miss any classes. Just like now, I question to skip a class.

Interviewer: What was it about the school that you enjoyed? Can you take yourself back in your mind to the time when you were maybe in the first or second grade, and tell me about something that was exciting for you, or that you enjoyed doing?

Maybe what I liked was that ... it was kind of my responsibility. I took it as, I don't go to work, I go to school, I have to take it seriously. And when I was assigned, ... some homework, ... it was like I had to do it and I had to do it really well because it made me feel good.

Interviewer: It was your job.

Yeah. And actually [it] was maybe a little like [a job], too much, ... because I would get very frustrated if I didn't get the top mark. ... But yeah, I took it, like, as a job, I think. And I enjoyed it.

[I became f]rustrated when I did something and I didn't get the mark that I would hope I would (chuckles), that's a little bit of perfectionist I guess, as a child. (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

Viktoriya seemed to deal with her frustration by working harder. She was extremely particular about her homework, and became very self-disciplined. She recalled how her sister was not as diligent.

Interviewer: The homework, did your parents help you with it on occasion?

Only at the beginning, ... to kind of get me used to the... routine. But then I was... conscientious I think, and very hard working little pupil. ... Well, for example, my sister, I had to help her all the time, to discipline her into [working] ... like once she's there, she's studying, she'll do everything, but just getting her to do that [is difficult]... I have to do my homework first and then I can go for walk. Pioneer, you know, like those... Pioneer (chuckles).

Interviewer: Pioneers, yeah.

Very responsible. (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

Viktoriya began to detail her experiences within the Children of the October and the Pioneers. She found that the social organization of children at a young age was very

important. It taught very positive messages, and gave children a place to belong—giving them an opportunity to be a part of something much larger than themselves. It also supported the general achievement of the student body.

Interviewer: Was that taught in Pioneers? The idea of being very responsible for your work at school ...

Uh huh, before Pioneers, I don't know what you've heard, but Oktyabryata ... they had rules, you know, like, little short little statements about working hard. I can't remember all of them, but there were ... seven or eight rules that were constantly repeated. ... [W]e were reminded once every month there would be an hour the teacher would ... go through this Oktyabryata, and how we should be responsible, we should work hard, we should help each other and... Oh, they were kind of basic, ... good values. For me it wasn't like Oktyabryata or Communist Party, "I have to be Communist," or "I have to be good because the Communist told me to," but just... the message was good.

... Interviewer: Did they encourage people to help each other out in both Oktyabryata and in Pioneers?

Yes, in school ... the class was broken into [groups]... it was zvyozdichki [звёздочки or p'yatirki / п'ятірки in Ukraine] kids, little stars, so groups of five students. I don't know if you're familiar with that. Five students, ... we are kind of [a] group and we help each other and if there is one student who is not successful ...—like was ... underachieving—then the rest of the zvyozdochki kids should be... would be helping them. ... [I]f there was something they didn't

understand, the other ones were encouraged to help them to... repeat it again, help with the homework. Yeah. (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

Viktoriya explained that because the Children of the October and Pioneers were built into the school experience, these ideas of responsibility and supporting others permeated a larger population.

Interviewer: Was everybody was part of Oktyabryata and in Pioneers?

[N]o, some people for religious reasons they weren't, but pretty much yes. And kids were excited, I know that we were excited when we were at that age where we could become Pioneers. But because ... some kids who were born in summer ... were a little older ... they could get into Pioneers in the summer, and ... kids ... who were born in spring they could get into the Pioneers before the end of the school year. And the rest of us would kind of be left behind ... until the next year, so that was bit disappointing. Like, well, we were just kids. But I think it's good for children to have something that unites them. [T]he whole... the overall idea I liked it, just the ideology yeah, it was wrong. But it was good that children ... had something to do (chuckles), you know? They had those little projects they were working on and they did things together, like those values that I was telling you about, those rules. I think it was good. Because later on when it was... all broke down, kids were lost, like nothing to hold on to. ... That was not good I don't think. (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

This was an interesting perspective of the value of these groups to young students, which shed light on the void that appeared for children when these supports were no longer present.

System Change

In August, 1991, Vitoriya was away from home. She recalled her concern when she discovered that the coup had taken place.

You know I didn't.. it's funny because I didn't even know that happened. I was at that time at the Pioneer camp, in Odessa, which is [on] the Black Sea.

... And so I didn't even know that it happened, ... somebody ... started saying something the next day, and then I phoned my parents because we were so scared. ... We got scared right away, didn't know what was going to happen to us. ... [S]o how do we go home? What was going to happen. Just you know, didn't know what's happening that was the scary part. And I remember phoning my parents and "Hello, what's happening?" ... [A]nd when I came back, it was about at the beginning of September already, everything kind of settled down, yeah. So, I didn't really go through that... no, I didn't watch it on TV. We ... had TV there at the camp so... I just lived that (chuckles)... that excitement, you know, and kind of... "what's happening?" (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

Returning to school in September, Viktoriya recollected the feeling and how little, in fact, things had changed.

It wasn't much different. The changes started a little before that too, like in terms of curriculum, ... the history class was ... all over the place ... nobody knew what was happening, what was supposed to be taught. Teachers often like didn't have textbooks; they only were working from little booklets that they were given.

[D]uring perestroika, ... the last two years of school. Would be three, two or three years. And literature, ... with the change, ... the writers that were taught or presented to us before, they were not that relevant any more, so again, new authors and teachers were taking courses, and some were themselves too, ... to learn more about those writers and poets that we were supposed to study, so... It was confusing, the last couple of years, but I don't think like the last year was particularly... or maybe I just don't remember. But that's just... my recollection.

I remember, we had debates too, in class, because a lot of articles would be ... published in the newspapers about ... the events that happened but from a new perspective, ... sometimes students would read them and they would bring them to class and then teacher would have their own... perception of that and ... we had some arguments I think, oh, I remember. I ... can't ... tell you a story, I don't think. Just overall confusion. ... And probably, ... before, ... we thought that teachers knew everything (chuckles), and then it started the teachers would have to consult ... the sources more, because they didn't know themselves ... the whole story. (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

This recollection caught a glimpse of not only issues for the students, but also of the adjustments that were necessary on the part of their teachers.

Viktoriya also discussed the economic difficulties resulting from the change. For her, it was not a particularly substantial issue. However, she mused about the nature of the experience of those around her—both her senior and junior—and about how individuals were able to adjust to the economic hardship.

I was ... seventeen in 1992, and I should say that like my parents ... took care of ... the financial and economic... side of life at that point. So I didn't really feel myself personally that... [involved.] ... I saw a lot of ... people struggling like that, ... elderly people ... with ... whatever they could save, ... being left at the bank and then it's still there at this point. But why people... how people adjusted... I guess you know when you have a family, whatever is happening around you, you just need to focus on your family and fight for that. ... [T]here is no time thinking about what was happening, you just have to do something, and at that time, a lot of ... confusion, people trading things and going out, suddenly going to the [bazaar] ... usually people were going there, buying stuff, selling stuff. And actually that's when ... this whole thing started, like buy and sell business. ... [A] lot of younger people went into that direction you know, like buy and sell. And their kids are totally different than us, ... than we were, because for them, at that point, everything was coming easily. ... [T]here were elderly and student professors and teachers who ... didn't see their salary for months, and pensions that they couldn't live on. But ... there were people who were ... making a lot of money at that time and their children, they saw that... like they didn't feel the lack of anything, and they somehow got the idea that everything can be bought, so they ... didn't see value in education. ... And it's

true, it's sad, but it's true, that they could buy anything they wanted. They could even though they weren't ... trying to study at school, they could get into prestigious university or institute because their parents could just buy their way into that. And yeah, and I could see that on my sister's ... fellow students, whose parents were ... like businessmen. ... [T]hat was sad, but ... the change... people just had to live with it and take care of themselves. ... It was impossible for elderly people to adjust because they've lived all their lives in a totally different world, and ... market economy... You just can't get used to it. ... [B]ut people in their forties, and I'd say thirties, they were most successful. (Viktoriia, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

As Viktoiya spoke of economic difficulties, she naturally shifted the conversation into a discussion of characteristics and situations that affected people's abilities to adjust to change, a topic she later more personally addressed.

Success and Resilience

Viktoriia, like the other participants hitherto, believed that she was a successful individual. Her understanding of success at an early age was similar to that held by Dmytro. She related success to her accomplishments and marks in school, followed by commentary on extra-curricular success.

Just accomplishing whatever you were starting to do, ... to the end, and being... trying your best. And I kind of knew from the beginning that I would go to the university... higher education ... meant a lot to me I guess. Well, my parents insist. And just being the best at whatever you did ... whether it's just playing

something... maybe that's why I quit ... my piano lessons because I saw that ... it wasn't really happening, I was just frustrated. I could do it, ... looking at the notes, but it wasn't coming. ... I didn't have that gift. ... [T]hat's why I quit. And... if it's just homework, everything has to be perfect. The writing, the...

Interviewer: ...Penmanship?

Yeah, everything. So... I don't know if [perfection was] necessarily a good thing though (chuckles). Sometimes ... I was frustrated at home by that...

Interviewer: What about a little bit older, when you were in the eighth, the ninth grade, was it any different?

No, not for me. ... I finished school with [a] gold medal, and then university was, I don't know, if... red... [a] red diploma [In the Soviet Union, diplomas were either blue or red in colour. A red diploma is roughly equivalent to an honours diploma].

Interviewer: All fives out of five? (Viktoriya concurs) Wow.

Yeah, all red. So I was a perfectionist throughout ... school. And in grade ten I already knew that I was going to enter ... the university of course and that I would be going for my English degree. And because we only had ... one class, one English class a week, I had a private tutor. And I was working on ... a lot by myself in my English. ... I was just working ... all the time, I was studying English and reading books and everything because I just wanted to succeed, maybe (chuckles). I guess it just was the same like when I was little too, doing best I could. (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

What stood out was the comment midway through where she began to contemplate the effects on an individual of such a definition of success. She continued along this line of thought later in the interview, recalling her opinion of success now and a recent conversation with her sister.

Now let me think... now that I am older and wiser (chuckles) I think, ... it's ... too much of a pressure trying to be perfect at everything. And when I'm talking to my sister ... she's finishing her first year in medical school there, so I'm telling her, "You know you don't have to kill yourself to get the A," (chuckles) or... because that's what I was doing. ... [Y]ou just have to relax and not do anything, or whatever, I don't care, it's just ... one step at a time, and try to do as much as you can but not to the point of driving yourself crazy. (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

As the conversation shifted toward the topic of resilience, Viktoriya contemplated her experiences throughout her life. Building on the definition of success presented in the literature, she evaluated its relevance within her own context.

Well I can see that ... little successes make it possible for more successes because once you succeed you gain more confidence and that gives you more strength. ... [I]t makes sense. And I think I've adjusted to different situations well. ... It's hard, ... I have [a] problem talking about my story, analyzing myself (chuckles), but ... that change didn't knock me off my feet, ... or anything. I had maybe something ... to hold on to, not the Pioneer, ... not the ideal, but ... [the] values

that came from my family that... helped me, ... to adjust and just go through whatever that happened. (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

Near the end of the interview Viktoriya began to discuss the support mechanisms that were in place within the school system. They were relevant, because their purpose was to foster student success. Similarly, they denoted an experience where there were opportunities for the establishment of strong bonds between children and both role models and adults. She began by recalling the opportunities present for students to find help with their studies.

[W]e had extra classes ... a couple of times a week. ... [W]e had a schedule in the hall ... at school where you could pick up some ... classes, extra classes in math. You have times when you could ... come in ... that was not for the marks, just whenever you had questions you could ... go ... to the teacher. Teachers were supposed to be present; ... like office hours.

But even if kids didn't come they have to be in there (chuckles). ... [F]or pretty much most of the subjects, [but] not for phys. ed. ... You could do that, or... do you know what class klasna kerivnichka [класна керівничка] is? (Interviewer denies knowing.) ... [W]e were ... taught in cluster in class, in clusters ... we moved all together ...

Interviewer: We call this 'home room'.

Yeah, home room.

...So that teacher ... would be the same teacher [we had] for the elementary school from grade one until three. All three years. So the teacher ...

had a chance to be with the kids for a long time, to follow... their progress or regress, or however they were developing. And then again from grade four until grade seven we had the same teacher. ... [T]hat home room teacher was not only our teacher in school but also responsible for ... parent- ... school relations, [they] would visit and have regular visits at home. And so it was nice because you know the teacher could just follow the child and could see if something was bothering or troubling the child. ... [M]aybe something was happening in the family, so they could ... contact ... the work, the parent's ... boss. They were allowed to do that, complain to the wherever the parents worked, too.

Interviewer: So say this again, the home room teacher, if they found that there was a student who was having trouble, they could go and talk to the parents (Viktoriya agrees), and...

They could also go to the place where the parent worked ... and just mention that there is an issue, ... like this parent, he just has to...

... talk to that parent, because ... he's not coping with parent responsibilities or something (chuckles), let's put it that way. ... Yes, if [students] had problems ... the teacher would, in most cases notice ... that the child is not doing well but if the child approaches the teacher then they would just arrange some extra time with the teacher or... a student would be assigned to help that student after class. ... I was helping quite often. And that, ... with the homework and it was ... maybe sometimes even dragging that student to the class ... if they just wanted to skip... just kind of ... watch that student. (chuckles) Help them, ... kind of ... become an older brother or sister... And also, in that

[home] room when we were Pioneers, Oktyabryata, ... I was in [about] grade two ...[class B]. The kids who were three years older, ... from grade five B, they would be our... what do you call it in English?

Interviewer: Care-Partner?

Yeah, care, yeah, maybe *care-partners*. So they would come read to us.

Interviewer: Wow, how often?

Couple of times a month. Not... not every day.

... It's three years difference. It was because ... this teacher who was with us through grade one to three ... once those kids graduate from grade three, she has grade one and so those ones are care-partners for the same teacher. And so she knows both, you know. It's not like that any more, which is ... sometimes not very good. It was a very organized system back then. So those kids could help the child with problems. I guess things were [supportive]. But the overall system, from what I think, was like doing paper... like was aimed at succ... achieving, high achieving student.

Interviewer: Was it?

Uh hmm. It was really hard for kids who ... missed something to come back to it.

Interviewer: What happened to them?

They were ... dragging, lagging behind, but some ... found strength and they ... studied better later on. A lot of them ... were dragged from one grade to the other. Yeah, it's true that it was for them most of the time, for high achieving

students. Or achieving, ... doing pretty well, following the curriculum, the material, being able to cover. (Viktoriya, personal communication, June 23, 2003)

Viktoriya's admission that the system was aimed toward the higher achieving students was remarkable, and was something that Ihor, the fourth interview participant, also described. At the heart of the socialist ideology, as was discussed in the final section within Chapter Two, was equality of opportunity—something that was present within the ideological basis of the Oktyabryata, Pioneers and Komsomol. As the layers of the participants' experience were pulled away, a more clear understanding of the difference between ideology, pedagogic policy and reality begins to emerge.

Ihor

Born in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv in 1975, Ihor was a doctoral candidate in physics at a Canadian university at the time of this study. His mother was an educator, and his father was an engineer at the renowned Kharkiv Aviation Institute. The mixed philosophies of his parents related to Ihor's education— his father believing more in the experience of education, his mother believing that performance was a means toward the end of security—were the foundation of many discussion, as he recalled.

Ihor, like Viktoriya, quickly began to engage in the dialogic reflection that is a goal of the qualitative interview. His stories were used as examples of his analysis; analysis that developed within his own retrospective *mind-flow*, and which, on occasion, grappled with itself in short, contradictory bursts. In truth, Ihor was an ideal qualitative

interviewer participant—opening his reflective process by answering questions aloud in long explanatory passages, many of which are presented in the pages that follow.

School Life

Like many of the other participants in this study, Ihor held very positive memories of his first experience within school. For some, this experience began in yasli, for him it began in kindergarten. Ihor recalled a story which depicted the experience of a creative youngster, full of imagination.

Well it was fun. Lots of friends there and we did lots of stuff by ourselves there. ... Well I remember some things. ... [W]e were making a plot with some friends of mine to blow up the whole kindergarten. Well this is a usual thing, we arranged lots of things, it was just a...

Interviewer: ...playing...

...Yeah, mostly but we were playing seriously, and then finally ... we arranged to meet at midnight somewhere and go to pick up something ... somehow we wanted to blow up the kindergarten. And then ... nobody came at the midnight, of course, and everybody slept in ... and next day when I came there it turned out that one guy who we later allowed into our secrecy, ... he turned us in to the... kindergarten... instructor?

...Teacher, ya. So he traitored us... betrayed us. ... [W]e couldn't even beat him up because the teacher was watching us. But while she... punished us, sort of ... she didn't do much but she just said, "Okay, I'm calling police now," and she went to the phone and she actually called somebody, then we started

begging her to for pardon, ... then she said, “Okay, next time you will have more problems, but not today you are free.” ...

... I think she was just mostly laughing at us. She was having fun too. So [I remember] experiences like that. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor explained, in broad terms, the nature of his formal academic experiences, after the time he spent in kindergarten.

... I entered school at the age of seven, almost eight—turned eight two months after that. I changed three schools, ... [but] not because I had to change them ... I studied in Kharkiv, [it] is the second largest city in Ukraine—... eastern Ukraine. So, [I] first entered the school where my mother worked, maybe partially because she didn’t want me to get too far from her. ... I studied there for [the first] four years ... then I transferred to usual elementary school. I don’t know if it’s called *elementary* though, it’s just the usual school. Well, [I] had some tough time there because in the first school, [it was] some kind special school, ... you can compare it with... first go in a hot house, and then going into the open. That was tough a little, ... I had to adapt to that lifestyle. ... [T]hen I studied ... in that school for three years, and then I heard about an opening in ... 1990. A new style, ... new kind of school opened in the city, it was sort of a privileged school, but not privileged ... on financial basis. It was privileged on educational basis, so there was some competition to enter that school and... it basically selected the best students in the city. ... Had three classes with three specializations, [a] physical-mathematical class, and [a] linguistics class, and [a]

chemistry and biology class. So I entered the physics and mathematics class and finished that school. ... Then, actually, ... [that] latest school where I studied for three last years ... well it's [the] best school ... out of all three [I attended]. ... I was grown up enough at that time so ... It's hard to compare it with the first school where I was just a kid but ... compared to the second school it was definitely privileged, sort of elite school. So I got ... quite a good education there ... and it was quite liberal, and they told us to think, ... they didn't teach us subject, they taught us to think freely and well, creative way. ... [T]hat was the school which actually decided my further career and interests because I was lucky to meet a very good physics teacher there and he arranged some ... it was called "Olympiads." ... [H]e didn't organize them but he arranged for us to participate, ... and when I participated in those physics Olympiads first in on the city level and then on the Republican... the country level, it made me believe in my abilities and then actually really inspired me in physics. So that's why I entered the university, going to the physics department... physics and technology. So pretty much that ... entering in that school decided my further education and hopefully career. So I studied in elementary school from 1983 to 1993, ten years. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor's encounter with that one special physics teacher, and his participation in the physic Olympiads, were moving events in his young life. He recalled the drive he saw in himself while outlining the details of his experience around one particular Olympiad.

We once went to that country Olympiad, sort of *Competition of Young Physicists* it was called. It wasn't the usual stuff, [usually] you come there and they give you some problems to solve, right away, and these ... are solvable ... like from the text book, but some advanced text book. ... [S]olvable within some few hours, for example. But on that kind of competition, they gave us the problems ... two months in advance, and the problems sounded like, ... for example, if... "When a diver enters the water [there are] lots of bubbles, there are bubbles created around his body. Estimate the average quantity, number and the size, of these bubbles." So this is the whole problem. And you are free to do whatever assumptions and build any model you want, so it's kind of real research problems. And when we gathered there was a team of our school. I was the ... leader of that team and we gathered instead of [going to] some boring classes on literature, for example. We had some kind of free time. Well, we had a good excuse to, you know, not to attend some lessons, being [that we were] preparing for that competition. And we made some brainstorm of how... just threw some idea... people sat there and threw some ideas of how to solve it. And mostly ... it was just people who were not too serious, they were just having fun. So, I felt like I was dragging almost the whole process of solving that by myself, and ... I got a lot of help from other ... fellow students of mine, but finally it made me think that I'm almost can't capable of solving any problem with them treating... and that was [what] came into my head. ... So it was real good sensation of being ... free to solve whatever problem you want, like... like the one that I just gave, ... for an

example. Now I do real research and ... somehow it's not ... that much fun to do it. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor's talents in physics did not come naturally. Rather, he recalled the disillusion he faced when his marks plummeted after changing schools.

Actually there was some struggle between my mother and my father when I went to that third school it was called *lyceum*, because ... in the second school ... I had only highest grades on all subjects.

Interviewer: Fives?

Fives, yeah. When I went to that third school they taught us real physics and real mathematics, and most of the students ... all of them were first students in their previous schools, they suddenly got threes in their final grades ... not semesters but quarters. So I got three in physics and three in mathematics, ... so it was really embarrassing and shocking. So my mother ... saw what kind of effort I paid to ... catch up with the program because it was quite tough for me. I didn't know much mathematics, ... from the previous usual school, and it was really tough for me to ... catch up with the level of this new school. And she was afraid that I would spoil my final grades in the school. ... So she sometimes ... asked me to think again and maybe come back to that previous school and not to struggle too much, but my father supported me in that, he said that he chose it, he wants to do it, and let him do it. So finally I got into fives from there. It was a long way, ... took me some effort but I don't regret that I stayed there, and that I made it. Because I got some very good friends, we're still good friends, with the

classmates at that last school. We kind of support each other, we still communicate. Actually we're now spread all around the world, mostly North America and in Ukraine, so, fifty-fifty. ... I got some very good friends from that school, and I think it was a good education. So... I don't know. I probably would have been quite a different person if I quit in that school. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor shared with all of the other participants the experience of working with a single teacher for the first three years of school. He recalled enjoying that time, and reflected on its significance in his social development.

First it was only one teacher in all subjects, and then maybe starting from the second or third year we got a few more teachers. ... [I]n the fourth year we had several teachers, say in English there was one teacher, nature was another one, and some Russian language and literature there was another. ... [B]ut before that... probably it was only one or two [teachers].

Interviewer: Did you like your teachers when you were that young? (Ihor agrees.) What was it about them that you liked?

Just liked them. ... I guess kids at that age would like most of the teachers because the teacher is somebody who tells about things, ... they also sort of took care of us during lessons. So the teacher was quite an authority. And they were good women, too.

Interviewer: Was it a good idea to have the same teacher for a number of years?

I think so, yeah.

Interviewer: Why?

... [W]hen one young children enter this preschool or the first years of school, they go from being cared [for] by just one mother sort of, and ... just parents, into a much bigger society. It's good... could be a shock, right? So it's quite a transition. So if there was... if there were many teachers right away, they would just mix them up or ... it would be too overwhelming. ... So there was one teacher who teaches everything. It's like ... the teacher is your second mother, sort of. Afterwards, ... when you grow up then many teachers is another transition but it's not as acute ... as sharp as it would have been if you had lots of teachers right away. Because ... with one teacher you just get to know ... one more person, not ten more persons. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Another experience shared by Ihor and his cohort was participation in Oktyabryata and the Pioneers. Though the experience is shared, each individual's opinion of that experience and, in essence, the meaning that they made of it within the broader context of education, socialization, change, success and resilience, was unique. For Ihor, membership was, at times, a joy. At other times, it appeared as a burden.

Interviewer: When you were that young, were you Oktyabryonok [Октябрёнок (a member of the Oktyabryata)]?

Yeah, of course I was. ... Everybody was, yeah.

Interviewer: Can you tell me a little bit about what that meant to you?

I didn't like that too much. Well, I liked this little badge with the star and young Vladimir Ulyanov [the former name of Vladimir Ilich Lenin], I liked all the attributes of that, but...

Interviewer: What were the attributes?

Well mostly this star and sometimes ... they might these [group] meetings ... out of the class basically, but we were not called "class" anymore, it was almost like a Pioneer symbol, same symbol as like how do you call this, Boy Scouts...

... Troop, yeah, yeah, so we had a troop instead of class then. So...

Interviewer: How many people in [the troop]?

Just the class, twenty people. And then it was divided into ... leagues, it's a lame translation but, subdivisions and then ... at that time when we were Oktyabryata, it was called "stars, little stars," [zvyozdochki] so it was troop and the "little stars," containing five people in each, I think. And [then] ... we became Pioneers. ... [I]t's analogous to Boy Scouts, I think. But we didn't go to camps during the school, there were summer camps for Pioneers but during the school also what I liked was this... it's [a] not tie but...

Interviewer: Scarf?

Scarf, ... yes, ... red scarf... but what I didn't like was all these formal things. Like these meetings, leaving the class and [doing] political information sessions, so everybody had to read some news from the newspaper on the political situation in the world, for example, and then make a short report and be active in the discussion of that. You couldn't opt out of that. ... And they didn't force

you, ... they didn't punish ... well they didn't really force you by force, they just made you do it. Because if you didn't do it then you would be claimed as *inactive* and that was a bad thing, and they tried to get you into that somehow. But mostly for me, ... it was quite boring. Now I probably would have enjoyed it. But at that time, I didn't care much about it. ... [W]e were taught some ... basic things like ... I remember there was an action, way off, liberating somebody ... Pinochet maybe? ... I don't really remember. Somebody was tortured by evil American imperialists and we ... they collected signatures to send into White House or something like that and to liberate ... get the person out of prison. There was also this thing about Samantha Smith. [She] was an American girl who wrote a letter to Brezhnev [later in the interview he corrects this statement, recalling that the letter was sent to Andropov, not Brezhnev], ... and she also asked ... some questions about ... how the children in the Soviet Union live, and he answered her and invited her to the Soviet Union and she came, and she spent a few months there having a really good time. ... Yeah, it was... actual, so we had to be capable of ... orienting into meeting the world politics and stuff like that. ... I didn't like [being] the big elected leader of the troop, and it basically meant that I had ... to carry some registry of how the leagues work. There were some formal things ... each day some group had to do [activities such as] cleaning. ... And I had to keep track of that, ... how everybody is doing. ... [T]hen make a report in front of the whole troop of how different people work and [how] could we do ... something better. I really hated that and finally I decided to ... lose that registry, which was a really bad thing to do. ... I took that registry and stuck it somewhere

... under some heavy, really heavy... bookcase, where it couldn't be found. But [it's] probably still there. And on the next meeting ... I [stood] and said that I lost it. And of course there was lots of ... fuss about it, saying that ... *irresponsible* person can not be a leader of our troop, which was my goal, actually. And they said okay we will elect another one, and it was a great relief for me. So, ... I had to go through this ten-minute torture of being claimed as irresponsible ...—"shame on you," and stuff like that. But after that I was free (chuckles), I didn't have to do it any more. ... Yeah, so I became just a usual guy. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor's story about the responsibility he despised was interesting on a number of levels. It examined the nature of childhood interest in organizational activity. Similarly, it suggested that childhood irresponsibility, in Ihor's case, was punished through public denunciation and that responsibility was a value the Oktyabryata and Pioneer organizations were trying to teach. It is not the place of this thesis to pass judgement on the methods of these organizations, but simply to present ideas as a piece of one former member's consciousness.

Ihor was asked his opinion of the Pioneers, and if, in his judgement, the organization was a good environment in which young people should grow.

Well it wasn't a bad thing, but it mostly it was just [a] formal thing, and therefore it was nothing for me. For example, ... I know that some Pioneers, [had] really interesting activities but not at our school. [I heard about] some really good ... camps, and there were some other activities where we could have fun. There

were some games called zarnitsa [зарница] ... basically a sort of military game ... there ... were two groups and they went to some open ... place in the woods for example, ... and then they would play a little war there. It was just exciting, ... with some of the attributes of [war], even with these little grenades, which just made this noise. ... I once watched it. I wasn't old enough to participate, yet, I watched it, ... the older guys from our school [participated]. ... [T]he whole day was really exciting. ... [W]e who were younger, we just went there on feet with backpack so it was ... almost like camping, for one day. So ... that was good thing but it happened quite rarely so mostly it was ... formal meetings, boring. ... It ... reminds me of what sometimes is going on here [in Canada], ... people also like to meet and discuss some bull shit, mostly. Just for the sake of sitting there and chatting about something. They also need the registry, ... who said what and the comment, mostly it's just talking about... well, maybe it's important for them but I just listen for that. That doesn't appear to be important for me so... It really resembles these sessions. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor appeared to conclude that his experience had proven that the Pioneers were not unlike all organizations in many ways, as he reflected on procedural similarities.

System Change

Ihor recalled the moment that he heard about the coup. In recalling this story he also recalled his father's reaction to the event.

I was in Crimea [in the Ukrainian SSR on the Black Sea] with my father, not too far from Gorbachev, I think (chuckles).

... [W]e were on vacation so I remember ... crowds on the... squares, ... where there were some megaphones with radio translations. I remember people having green faces, like everybody was, ... shocked or... preoccupied of what was going on there, ... we just listened for it... bits and then my father said, “okay, what can we do? Let’s go swimming.” So, we did. We just ignored mostly whole thing. And then [in] a couple of days, of course, all resolved. So... somehow it didn’t touch us too much. We were on vacation so we just enjoyed ourselves. And then when it collapsed I don’t remember much of a shock, because it didn’t collapse all of a sudden. ... [I]t was expected already by most of people and some people ... met this news enthusiasm. And that time, ... I was in Ukraine so there were some nationalistic movements. They still are there but they are not popular any more. At that time people thought that, okay, now when we’re separate from Russia, independent, we will manage our ways ourselves and we will just flood the Russia with sugar and with ... crops and [so on], we will become rich soon. Of course it didn’t happen. So... But at that time people were not too upset about the collapse of the Soviet Union. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor explained that the change, specifically the dissolution of the country, was not greeted by many people as a catastrophe, but rather it was heralded as an opportunity of sorts.

At that time ... [it was considered an opportunity], but then disorder came and [that] was a good opportunity for some people to get really rich, when there is a

disorder. But that was a time when most magnates appeared, really rich people, ... by ... selling everything they could. Strategic things like metals ... just to [the] West. Just to earn something. So basically by robbing the country. And the rest of the people got poorer and poorer. Now it's slightly improved, I think it went back to some sort of equilibrium. So now there are really rich people and there are less really poor people now, maybe because all the poor people died. ... But the common level of living of ... usual people [is], slightly risen and it continues to rise as to my opinion. As to what I see. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor contemplated the meaning that the change had for him. He explained the difference between what he characterized as a *global* change and a *local* change.

Well, I don't know, not much [different], I think. I didn't think about it too hard because ... the things changed globally, ... I knew that there was no Soviet Union any more, but locally not much has changed except that we had a new currency, and the ...

Interviewer: Karbovantsi ... Coupon [карбованці (the Ukrainian hard currency exchange coupon between 1992 and 1994)]?

Yeah, and the prices went up very steeply, so that was a bad thing of course because we suddenly ... well we lost all our money, most of us. And see the inflation rate ... was very huge at that time so... That was a bad thing but... the formal name of the country didn't matter too much, had some other problems to deal with. ... [I]t was one year after studying at that last school so I was

preoccupied with studying at that time, too. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

When asked about the nature of school following the coup and the change, Ihor remarked confidently that little had changed. Having said this, however, he admitted to not being fully comfortable with some of the results that change begat.

No. I don't think it [changed]. Only ... in 1990 I remember feeling not quite well. ... We went to a trip to Latvia, to Riga, with three classes, the whole stream ... all three classes went to Riga. And I just had [about] 150 roubles with me, which wasn't too much, but I remember seeing some ... other students, whose parents were ... much richer than we were at that time, so they have like ten times more, and they spent all of it. And I didn't envy them, but somehow we didn't feel quite well that somebody can have ... ten times much more money than I could. So... that was the only thing that maybe changed. [It was] more dramatic afterwards because my mother is a teacher and my father is ... an engineer, aviation engineer, so at that time of the collapse and huge inflation rates, ... I wouldn't say that we had nothing to eat, but we couldn't afford much on their wages. And I didn't earn anything at that time. So... it was slightly depressing that we cannot afford much at that time. But it didn't depress me too much, it wasn't too bad.

Interviewer: You had to survive?

Yeah. But it wasn't too bad, ... we had an apartment, we had food, it's just that mostly we had the basic food, we couldn't eat ... some high quality

meats every day, for example. ... So it [was] not too bad. I think people had much worse times that we did.

... Some older people who worked ... all their lives even had to ... go to draw through garbage, just to find something to eat. I saw people like that too.
(Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor was able to illustrate the extent of change around him, that which affected him personally, though school continued to be perceived as a constant during this time.

Success and Resilience

During the interview, Ihor was given the opportunity to discuss his own success. He modestly retorted that he was not very successful, but described the nature of the support he had during that period of his life.

Well I don't know if I was extremely successful, well mostly I think because the [change] didn't hit too hard.

Interviewer: Why was that?

I had ... good care [from] my parents, and as I said, it's just that we couldn't afford some nice things at some period of time, but still we had something to eat, ... we were able to even buy clothes once in a while. And then ... I think in 1994 I received a scholarship from that city of Kharkiv. Like there was a ... still is, a foundation ... called Foundation for Support of Young Talents, and I somehow got into receiving that scholarship. It was 500 US dollars, huge money for me and for my family. So ... I bought some clothes ... for myself and

for my parents, too. ... [A]fter that my father started to earn quite good money (he does still). So it wasn't too bad. So I wasn't primarily concerned about how to survive. It was just ... knowing things. ... I could survive without ... it wasn't [that] you can not afford the luxur, ... but you can live on what you got. So... I think that's why it didn't hit too hard. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor described his own definition of success, both before and after the change. For the young Ihor success meant one thing, popularity. For the older Ihor it meant comfort and happiness.

... Well mostly success would mean popularity among girls, of course, at that time, being popular among them, but I never achieved that (chuckles).

...Well it's true. ... [O]f course you want to be really popular, ... but I didn't think about any long success in ... that time. I didn't even know whom I wanted to be, what kind of profession I wanted. I just sort of floated with the stream mostly.

Interviewer: What about now? After the change?

The same.

... [A]t that time after the final year in school, of course I wanted to become a great physicist, which I failed [to do]. And now ... I don't know, I'm again floating with the stream mostly. ... I want to have a good quality of living, of course, and ... I have a wife and a son and I want them to be happy, ... and to have good quality of living also. But really I have no idea of what I'll be, where

and what I'll be doing in half a year, for example, because I'm finishing my degree now and looking for a job. And don't go very well so far, ... most people just don't respond to my applications. Some people just say that they have no money. Well I think it's the usual process. It depends on where I find a job. Sometimes I just think that maybe I should go back and almost quit, maybe not quit physics but quit doing physics abroad, because ... I'm sure that I will survive there, I will...

Interviewer: In Ukraine?

Yeah. I will ... not only survive but will be able to live normally. Only I would have to pay much more effort to do that in Ukraine than here because here it's really relaxing. [Here] I ... can devote myself to doing a research and not care about ... money, much. There I would have to ... do something else, too... in order to get a good quality of living. ... Because physics doesn't pay too well... there. So... right now, ... well I decided for myself that if I find a job somewhere then I'll consider it and maybe I'll go to where I find it. I'm looking for a post-doc job, not a permanent job. But if I don't [find a job] then it wouldn't be a catastrophe, I will just go back to Ukraine, I will think of something there. Maybe I will eventually turn into [a] computer ... program[mer], ... or something like that. [Being] a programmer there has much better chances to get your good living. Well of course you'd have to work too hard, quite hard also. So now I don't have any goal which I'm following, ... whatever it takes, now. I just ... looking for a job not very intensely. I could have done better I think. ... I just sorry, whatever the outcome would be, it ... wouldn't be a catastrophe. If I find a

job, fine. If I don't, not bad to... go back. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor was given the opportunity to contemplate his own resilience. He quite firmly concluded that he was a resilient individual, but for reasons other than one might expect. He explained how resilience was linked to his experiences in school, building on his enjoyment of succeeding. Like Viktoriya, he had come to recognize that being first in school did not necessarily equate with a healthy successful lifestyle. Ihor described his experience this way, first answering the question, “do you think you're a resilient person?”

Well in a sense yes, because I like to be successful. ... I used to like to be successful more than I do now, because, ... when I was studying at the university I don't have any four grades there, I have only fives ...—in all subjects. And sometimes I couldn't pass the exam ... with five mark from the first time, I got four and I said, “okay, I want to ... get retested.” So I paid some effort to be successful in that matter. But now when I came here, ... for example ... on some subject I got 90% which is quite low. Some other guy from St. Petersburg from Russia, he got say 98%. But he did that because he really wanted to be successful and he paid lots of effort to get that few extra percent. And somehow I felt like I didn't want to do that, because ... 90%, if I'm not the first in the class I'm second in the class, and it's not a big deal now. So now I didn't... see my drive for success has diminished. Instead of sitting in first. I didn't pay too much effort to be the first. So if it doesn't work out without much effort then it's fine. I'm okay

being second. ... I'd say that mostly it's because I just realized that the grades don't play much role in selection process or whatever, if it's all a lottery. I think that if the final grades on the subjects here would have been important, very important, then maybe I would pay more attention to it. ... [I]n the long run it turned out that his effort was not in vain because he got slightly bigger scholarship than I did, for his better marks. But still was okay with me now. ...[M]aybe I'm getting more lazy or older, because ... I look at his efforts to be the first in everything and it looked quite childish to me. Because even if we went to a swimming pool ... he almost got ... blown his cheeks for trying to be the first on the lane, so... After that he didn't go. ... [W]hen he beat everybody he quit going to the swimming pool.

Interviewer: That was enough, he'd won.

Yeah, that was his object just to beat everybody on the lane. We just went there for the fun of it, but he was so preoccupied with being the first. And I think it's quite stressful because he cannot always be first, sometimes ... there is somebody better than you and you suffer really bad and you try really hard to beat him. ... [For] some time I cease to like this stuff, so [I prefer to] be a second in among fifteen for example, than be first among fifty. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor was asked to describe the support mechanisms that were in place within his school, protective factors—to use the terminology of the *Resiliency Model* constructed by

Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002)—that supported children who were less successful than himself.

Well the only time I was not very successful was when I transferred to this last school. And what I did, I just studied, [by] myself. I didn't ask for any help. But there was some form of help in most of the schools, usual schools, when there were some people who got too bad marks. ... [S]omebody from the top end of the class was assigned to help him. It was [a] formal thing, so somebody was assigned by adults to help him. And it wasn't very successful because ... usually when the person was not good at studies it meant that most of the time it meant that he wasn't interested. ... It depends on the school, ... if you were in usual school you probably would get such a person to help you, and ... it would help you to get to improve your marks. And maybe ... if you become friends with that person then you would try to raise your level to achieve his level. ... But I never had such an experience myself. And mostly everybody [studied by themselves] ... and so ... I don't really know what could be your options in that situation. Highly depends on what school you are in, ... if it was some elite school you could just go back to your normal school, improve your grades. Or if you had a drive, you got really interested in improving your grades you would just have to work harder. ... You just try to ... get even with everybody else, or with the level of teaching class. ... [I]n my case everybody was below the level of teaching, somebody was almost on it, [there were] some stronger students from stronger schools, and maybe some talented guys. So we all tried really hard to get there too. I think ... even sometimes we got together but it was at the end when we

were getting ready for final exams, ... we were already quite good. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

As the interview was concluding, and after the tape recorder had been turned off, Ihor recalled a memory that he felt he should share. In many ways, it reflected his personal understanding of the system in which he lived as a child. It also reflected his drive for success and the lengths to which he would go to be successful. The tape recorder was turned back on, and Ihor recalled his experience by telling the following story.

I didn't tell this ... to my fellow students, some of them still don't know it but, ... I failed when there was a competition at exams to enter that third school, that Lyceum. I went to ... those exams, physics and mathematics were in June. I failed. Because I was really bad in math. I got two in math and three in physics. And their passing mark was six in total, so if I got three and three I'd have passed. ... I got upset because I wanted to get there but ... I failed it, okay, then that I'll go back to my previous school because it wasn't too bad also, because the class there, ... in my second school, first two years ... I studied at normal class and then they formed a sort of also special class with chemistry, deeper study of chemistry. And they selected the best students from the school because they had separate class. So last year in the second school I studied in that separate class. So I thought that ... I'll go back there and it's not much of a problem. But then I found out that a friend of mine ... applied, we went to that exam together, he got through so he got into that Lyceum. And it really upset me. And then I found out

that another friend of mine also got in—into a different class, a linguistics class but still he got into that school. And see that there comes this wish to be at least not last, not to be the last, so I ... felt really bad that they made it and I didn't, and plus I wanted to get into that school. So these two [wishes] combined tortured me for a while ...

... and then I started thinking what can be done. ... And then in August it suddenly occurred to me that probably they don't keep records of everybody who tried and failed. They only have the list of those who succeeded ... the exams, right? So, I went to the office of the director, head of that school on [about] the 30th of August. ... September first is the beginning of classes, so ... two days before the classes ... I pretended like I just found out about this new school because it was opening this very year, so I said ... "I want to study that in this school and what should I do?" She said, "okay, well where have you been before? It's too late. The exams were in June." So I pretended to be very surprised and upset by the fact that I missed that and she said, "okay, we don't want to lose the talents, [the teachers] will see what you are worth and then maybe we'll take you." And I came [the next day] and I talked to the mathematics teacher and it wasn't very good. ... Then I talked to a physics teacher it was much better because I was not too bad in physics at that time. ... Well maybe they just ... felt sorry for me, but then they ... granted me permission to enter. ... I hid this information from everybody ... throughout the whole school because I was afraid that they would find out and kick me out somehow because I wasn't very successful initially in that school I got really low marks. So I was afraid that

my teachers would find out. ... And maybe it was just my fears, maybe it wouldn't have happened, but still I hid that information. So, actually I was quite proud of myself cheating in that sophisticated way, ... entering that school, no matter what, and I still don't regret I did. So you might call it a drive for success but mostly it was just a drive to... Two wishes, at first I wanted to be in that school and second I didn't want to be left back because my friends went. ... So I got cheat, ...

Interviewer: Did your parents know?

Yeah, yeah, because they did.

Interviewer: What did they think about this whole...

Well they said that I'm *adventurist*, I don't know if there is such a word. ... [T]hey actually liked it, I think.

Interviewer: They were proud of you?

...[W]ell maybe, but I think, ... especially my father liked it. ... [H]e even congratulated me, but he said, "okay, good for you. You fooled them. And you got what you wanted."

Interviewer: You're smart enough to get in (chuckles).

Yeah, something like that. "So you wanted this really bad and you found a way, so that's good." That's what he said. Even ... starting ... maybe from the moment of the beginning of perestroika ... when there was more freedom, ... people started to learn something about pastimes. ... My father was a Communist and he suddenly realized that this whole thing was mostly fake. ... [N]ot ... the idea is beautiful, but the way it worked, when some people got to power and just

became more corrupted so lots of people felt like being cheated, or having been cheated for a long time. Because they really believed in this idea of communism and they were very enthusiastic about that. So, starting from some time he told me that it's okay to cheat, sometime. Said that you should watch your objectives, and you shouldn't trust people so much, ... except [for] the close circle of your friends and your family. Then with these people, we have to be quite honest and have to treat them well, ... but [with] the majority of people ... there is a law of jungle. "It is jungle out there," is what he said. Like if you need to cheat, you cheat. So... not very good thing to teach ... your kid, but sometimes it works.

... "You're.. you are too honest," he said, "that's your big disadvantage. I guess somebody else would just go over you, being honest. They have much more capabilities. Say I have a constraint by being honest, if you don't have this constraint you can achieve more." But, he also said that if you cheat, don't get caught. And he didn't teach me to cheat ... globally or on something with some bad intentions ... he said, "... here you cheated, you fooled them and your goal was to enter this school and to get a good education and this is okay. Totally okay to do that. Because your goal is quite good. You're not hurting anybody by this. But if you didn't cheat ... then you wouldn't have been in that school." (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

It was interesting to hear how a young Ihor "beat the system"—independent of parental or peer input. However, even more of note is how his situation came to parallel his father's views of surviving in a "changing society."

Lev

The final interview participant, a young man by the name of Lev, was born in Moscow, Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic. Before entering school, Lev became quite ill (an oddly common situation among the participants), and rather than attending yasli or kindergarten, spent a great deal of time with his grandparents. Lev's grandfather was fortunate enough to have been a long-time member of the Communist Party and the vice-president of a major import/export concern in the Soviet Union, and was granted certain privileges that were unheard of among the vast majority of Soviet citizenry. One such privilege was foreign travel. Lev explained his associate opportunity in this way.

I got one of the flus, ended up in some complications ...—at that time my grandparents were going to Switzerland—and so the doctor said, “if you get a chance to take him out of Moscow and get him some place with good air ... take him.” ... So when I was six, I went with them for about a year to Bern. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

School Life

Returning from Switzerland, Lev began school in 1984. He remembered being completely bored as a result of learning reading, and other basics while in the hospital prior to leaving for Switzerland.

... I started [school] when I was seven, just like most of the kids in the country. So grade one, [I] started out in the regular school, public school system. ...[C]lose to the apartment building. ... And so by the time I ... got to grade one

... [I was] bored out of my head already just because everything they were teaching the kids I was already doing by myself. So straight As, except for behaviour, and my parents in their ultimate wisdom figured, “oh, he’s so bright let’s stick him into a specialized school.” So grade two ... went to a German specialized school. ... [A]t that time the school week was a six-day school week, and so ... five days in that week we’d have German studies. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Lev recalled how his behaviour problems created study skill problems for him as he grew older. In his words, he “coasted through school,” not really knowing how to study properly, and academically just surviving.

So... grade two started there. And my grades of course went down. Whatever I learned before school by myself lasted me ‘til about grade three. ... And then after that while everybody was learning how to learn, I was sitting back of the room picking my nose and thinking of things to do, without attracting too much attention. And so ... you can say ... I sort of coasted through school. The last two, three years we had a number of teachers come and go, so my math, for example, was pretty weak because we had ... five teachers I think in the last two years. And so this turnover didn’t help the learning process. ... (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Contrary to the accounts of other participants, Lev did not speak as enthusiastically about his first long-term student-teacher relationship. He described how

having contact with one teacher for the first three years of school could be both positive and negative.

Yeah, it was fifty-fifty ... if you had a good person for a teacher, then great! You had ... a great relationship for the three years, from then on. If not then you were stuck with ... somebody nasty for three years with no way out, [as] it was for me, [in] grade three [my teacher] was seventy-six [years old] ... [she] should not have been teaching, a long time ago. ... [I]n fact, I think she taught well into her eighties. ... [G]rade one, at the regular school, I remember our teacher, and she was great! She was a recent graduate, ... young girl, full of p. and v., you know, and full of ideas and hopes, and willing to try things on you and help you and be there for you. Grade two, that being the specialized [school], the German one, the teacher, ... at seventy-six, ... wasn't teaching because she wanted to; I think she was teaching because she had to. ...

...[T]hat's all she knew. ... It also meant that she was quite bitter I think, and ... not happy about her life. ... Of course then, at the time, being seven, you think how much can you enjoy your life, you're seventy-six! Holy crap! You're ancient! You know? ... [S]he was ... pretty mean, she was an old-school communist and so you had to report everything to her and tell tales and tell on the other friends... and so she was the epitome of the good old system. ... She ... was one of those people who broke the spirits and I think introduced you to the whole political system the way it was, in the old days. Yeah, she was bad. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Many times through the course of the interview, Lev reflected on the intimate relationship he saw between the political system and his school-based experience. He recalled one story, early in his school career, where his grandparents had returned from a trip to the West with stickers and chewing gum. He brought these items to school, and gave them to his friends.

I told you about the bringing stickers and gum in school. And the ones who didn't get any because I didn't have enough told [on me to the teacher], and so I was given a public reprimand for bringing ... capitalist stickers and gum to the class, rather *corrupting our school*. That means... years ago, I was ten years at the time, so...

Interviewer: Did you realize what you'd done wrong?

No. ... No, it was humiliating. I was accused [of corrupting the school] just because it was humiliating to have that in public. And to see your friends speak badly of you. That was just heartbreaking...

Interviewer: Publicly?

Yeah. You then realize they were just part of the system. But then you start to thinking, and you think, "well, if it were them [in front of] the class would you be saying these things about them or not?" And it's one of those things ... you really don't want to be honest with yourself, you just pray that that it never happens that you have to be faced with the decision whether or not you betray your friends. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Lev was referring to how he was sent to stand in front of his class and listen as his classmates were instructed to denounce his capitalist behaviour. He then went on to discuss his experience as a member of the Oktyabryata and Pioneers. He explained the difference between a common western youth organization, the Boy and Girl Scouts, with the organizations within which he was a participant.

I think [Oktyabryata and Pioneers] penetrated a little deeper than Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, just because it was so much more focused on the political side of things. ... [T]here were meetings and gatherings and going out, [but] being part of [the Communist Party] ... the main focus was, I think, ... on the political, ... on the ideological side of it—more so than on ... any survival skills or anything like that. Like you have with Boy Scouts, for example, fundraising or things like that. So yeah, it was definitely part of your everyday life, and they tried to make it that as much as possible. ... [T]he day would start out with callisthenics, is that what you call them? (Interviewer agrees.) And you get lined up and ... march to your classroom. And on special occasions, they would have you lined up and marching in the schoolyard; [for] speeches and presentations and stuff like that. And you'd have paper recycling drives where ... you're supposed to bring ... old newspaper to the school. And always a competition and somebody would be standing in the schoolyard with ... a balance weight. ... [S]o your old newspapers [were] tied up and [weighed to] see how much you brought in and whether or not you're a good Oktyabryenok, or not.

Interviewer: Right, whether you're fulfilling the [Leninist] ideal...

...Exactly... there was always a connection to that. ... If there weren't, they made one up. You know. So that was the idea, ... this was your first introduction to the communist society, and your first chance to become part of it. And be the youngest representative of the Party. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Social organization was a topic Lev returned to many times when discussing his childhood school-based experiences. One particular example of this came when he contemplated the meaning that he made of his experiences within Oktyabryata and Pioneers.

... I can't say honestly that I remember Oktyabryata. You were accepted into the Pioneers I think in grade three, so this is between your eighth and tenth [birthday] ... two and a half years, you're Oktyabryenok. So [it] ... felt good at the time ... you felt accepted, you felt a part of something, and psychologically ... we all tried to fit, no matter what age, how old we are. ... [B]ut at that age it's even more important ... to fit in and belong and so they just played on that. Now, looking back on it, you certainly... you definitely see shortcomings, ... but at the time it was a pretty big deal. And it wasn't, at the same time, ... it was a big deal because it's a new stage in life and it wasn't a big deal because it was mandatory, ... you didn't have to do anything special, just [be] old enough, that's it. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Lev's experiences in Oktyabryata and Pioneers were important in his description of himself, and the nature of his success and resilience, as would be demonstrated. He explained the significance of dividing students into smaller groups, the so-called *zvyozdochki*.

Structure, discipline, introduction to how things are going to be later on. Military style. Division. Again a sense of belonging, played on that. Competition. You competed, the stars competed...

...against each other. Recycling paper drives. Your star was the best. You didn't succeed as an individual, you succeeded as a member of the stars. ...

...Also ... it was the first stage of sorting you within the society and checking out your leadership skills, checking out your level of rebelliousness. And also their first chance to break your back I guess (laughter). (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Lev not only described his experience, but also insightfully saw it as a preparation for, and even foreshadowing of, future expectations.

System Change

Lev explained the meaning he made of the change through his concern for his family's wellbeing. He contemplated its meaning by examining what really mattered in his life, and what seemed to be beyond his control—similar in many ways to the local and global notions of change that emerged from the conversation with Ihor. Lev saw the

change often used as an excuse to change everything, simply because it shared an association with the old way.

I cared for my parents, for myself, before glasnost and perestroika; I cared because I knew that if I say something ... it may have the effect on the entire family. It may somehow make it to their place of work, for example, and they'd be in trouble there. I didn't want that to happen so, of course, lots of things I thought I could have said... I remember thinking that ... I'd better keep my mouth shut. So when [change] did happen, it was this air of carelessness. "Grownups have left town, you can do whatever you want," ... [T]he thing is, as a kid, you still have your parents and some of the things that they've taught you that are wrong... Just because the country is on this road to glasnost' and perestroika, the family rules, the household rules, the household morals were still there and they haven't changed and they would never, and they're there to this day. And so, for a young lad, ... most of your life was either at home or at school. ... So at home, not much changed. At school, ... finally we didn't have to study the latest decrees of the latest communist gathering blah, blah, blah, and what they decreed this time around and last time around. ... Great! Who the hell wants to memorize all that crap! Things started to change around the school, callisthenics went, we didn't have to do ... that any more. Great! Looking back, what the hell was wrong with [callisthenics]! I don't see anything wrong with [callisthenics]. Now that I have a kid I wish when he goes to school they'll have something like that. ... [S]ome sort of physical education. A little bit here and there, you know. Looking at our [western] society, we're mostly overweight! ... So just don't

attach all the propaganda shit that they came with for me. ... Just stick to the actual benefits of it.

Interviewer: They almost started to throw out the good with the bad.

Yeah, oh, exactly. Absolutely.

Interviewer: Just for the sake of throwing something out.

That's right, exactly. The school uniform went. Didn't have to wear our uniform any more. Wow! Excellent! Girls looked good all of a sudden. Wow! Who knew...

Interviewer: Now is that a function of adolescence or was that a function of...

... A bit of both.

... So it's an improvement yeah. ... [L]ots of things were taken to the extreme just for the sake of change. School uniforms... one day they tried to legislate that, and we all came back, we had a toga party. We came to school wearing nothing but ... blankets. ... Slippers, and ... those rubber swimming pants and some stuff... painted ... and written on them. ...

... It was exciting! Hell! Something new!

Interviewer: Almost an opportunity more than a stress.

That's right, yeah, exactly. Yeah, that's... that's exactly it. That's exactly it. You were given the chance to do something that you wanted. Whether or not it was good for you didn't matter. You did it because it felt good.

... Yeah. Looking back on it again, just because it feels good to have a beer in the middle of the classroom, ... and then not worry about ... having to be

stripped of your star membership, ... being lowered in the ranks of the Pioneers, may have felt good. Was it good for you? Probably not. ... [L]ots of change, lots of change, fairly major I guess. ... Our school we had some connections with the foreigners most of the time, ... just because of the German. In '67 or '66 was when the school was founded, and starting in '70s I think, our classes started to go on the exchange trips. East Berlin of course, but never the West. So the change there was that this time we actually got somebody from New York to visit us. Great! Fun! [Someone spray-painted the wall:] "Yankees go home." Wonderful.

... Yeah, got to do something that was new, ... exciting, ... well American girls, holy crap! Again, a function of adolescence... probably. But ... five years prior to that we wouldn't have had the chance, that opportunity. ... (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Steering the conversation toward the meaning Lev made of his experiences within the change outside of his school, Lev, like all of the other participants, seemed concerned with the economic difficulties facing his family.

It was worrisome. ... [I]t meant family always mattered, and all of a sudden jobs were threatened, things weren't too sure, too certain, so I remember being worried about things and just like kids, ... kids always worry ... if the family's going to have enough money and whether or not they're going to be poor and out on the street all of a sudden, things like that. So it was worrisome in that sense. Change, what did it mean. Again it's ... the good values, the good things that you learn in life, you're going to learn no matter what. The importance of friendship, ... being

honest, ... hard work, those are things you're likely and hopefully will learn in any system—and any upbringing. So those things didn't change. What changed was ... the amount of uncertainty, it just shot up. ... All the things you used to take for granted were out the window. ... [A]nything from ... secure jobs, to money, physically the actual paper, you didn't know [if] you were going to be able to buy things with these particular bank notes tomorrow, or if you're going to have to get ... new ones. And are you going to be able to exchange them, one for one, or whatever the ratio is going to be. Or is there going to be a cap-off ... and you can only exchange so much. ... [A]nd so what's going to happen to your family or grandparents, they've saved up over the course of their lifetime, and if there's a cap off ... below the amount that they have in their savings account, then what? ... Uncertainty. But then you also learn that you have to take chances in life and ... if everything was handed to you on a plate, you probably wouldn't be as strong as you are, or wouldn't have learned the things that you have. So change, it's good and bad depending you know, depending on the day. ... If you're succeeding it's good change. If you're not succeeding you're going to blame it on the change, ... if you're going to be honest with yourself you realize it's life. It's health. There's going to be changes. Some as major, some maybe not. Some of them you're going to be causing and some of them are going to be just dumped on your head and you'll just have to deal with them. So... it just happened that for me it was probably the first major change, major conscious change in my lifetime it just happened at that time. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Lev described not only the worry of economic hardship, but in the same train of thought touched on the stability of basic values.

In a follow up email to Lev, his experiences within this broader, social context of change were discussed. He outlined his understanding of his place within the change, and the social culture surrounding the change that was emerging.

A healthy mix of fear of what's ahead and the feeling of: “it couldn't get any worse, so it's gotta be changing for the best” and then back to “it's gotta get a lot worse before it gets better.”...

[It was a] perfect breeding grounds for the capitalist opportunistic ideas. Taken to the extreme, of course. Making profit from anything and everything. People going blind from pure technical grade ethanol in the underground manufactured bottles of Vodka. Speculative trading. Buying and selling (in fact possession) of US dollars was a criminal offence. Yet millions engaged in “buying low, selling high.” By the time the criminal aspect was removed, a hierarchy of traders, bosses and clans had crystallized.

I got my own taste of the trend by washing cars on the Yauza river banks (a river that runs through Moscow, along with Moscow river). We had the buckets tied to the railings and we would drop them into the river and use that water for our “business.” The competition was brutal. Just like in the sex trade, there were zones, places you didn't dare of working in, there were “bosses” and the “sixes” (lowest position in the criminal hierarchy - the “goto”-boys). We had our ropes cut a couple of times and lost our buckets, ... we also had “lookouts” and the “roof” (protection). Since we worked next to a restaurant, the lookouts

were mostly there to notify us of the delivery trucks (licence plates were memorized) — by unloading their truck we got one box of whatever it was that we unloaded. Mostly beer. For some reason, the whiskey trucks had their own “muscles” in the back of the truck all the time. ...

Given an opportunity everything will be taken to the extreme. There have to [have] mechanisms to keep things in balance. Laws. An overnight revolution is probably the worst option when it comes to collateral damage. It gets things done, but it must not stop there—an emergency heart surgery is only successful when you actually fix or replace the damaged heart, cracking the chest is only the first step. ...

Ignorance is bliss. I'm glad I lived through those times. If nothing else, it made me think. Taught me to question authority, question decisions (including my own), taught me the price for a lot of things in life. For example, talk is cheap. (Lev, electronic communication, August 2, 2003)

What Lev described was a society wrapped in optimistic fear. On one side, a broad social dream of a better future; on the other, a fear that life would not improve. His experiences within suggested insight into his resilience and developed definition of success.

Success and Resilience

The meaning Lev made of his experiences growing up—expressed through notions like “their first chance to break your back” and his stories of public denunciation—interwove into the meaning he made of success. He recalled a time when he felt successful in his early school years.

The system plays you and you find a way to play the system as well, so... it's a two-way street. ... I may have been the leader of the star at one point and I was in the Pioneers I [think I] got to be ... a drummer. ...

... [S]o at the little marches ... drumming away. With a little hat and tie. And so that was one of the positions that got handed out to more successful Pioneers, I had... success. ... Success I guess, for my self, in that sense I'd define it as being able to use the system to my advantage. ... Scoring theatre tickets. ... [T]he class would go on a theatre outing and there were only so many tickets, so they'd only be given to the best of course. ... You got to pretend to be the best ... for a week prior to the class trip, [so] you got to go. ... I could be as devious and two-faced as I have to be. ... (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Lev explained that his understanding of success changed dramatically as he grew older. Again, he linked his experiences in the Oktyabryata and Pioneers to the sense he made of notions of success.

[I d]idn't care any more. Sure enough, can't go to a theatre by myself, what do you do? Who cares? ... I was devil-may-care ... let's get the time line. So I started school when I was seen in '84, so Pioneers I would have been accepted in '87, and Soviet Union dissolved four years later. And the Pioneer organization itself didn't dissolve until later I think, after the Soviet Union had dissolved. But the activity ceased long before that, so I only had a year or two of the actual Pioneer years. And never even got to go to the Komsomol, which was the next step, takes you to your university years, the last step before membership in the

Party. So those two years [in Pioneers] would have been ... [in the] late '80s. And I graduated in '94, so this would have been grade ... [f]ive, six, five and seven I guess. ... I may have won a couple of those competitions to bring recycling newspapers and things like that, but it didn't matter ... to me as much any more. So success can't be defined any longer, or didn't... since it doesn't matter—can't really succeed or fail if you don't care. ... [I]f you got something out of it, you played along, and if not, screw it. Looking back on it, ... you ... think ... that's probably not the best way of doing it morally, ... if you really have something against it well then don't do it. But, ... the system had succeeded making me part of the system in a sense, that ... going along with it was important to me. When I get something out of it. But... it was just minor stuff... I never had to betray a comrade or anything like that... (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Lev's most profound statement, summing his adolescent pre-change understanding of success as a result of his social experiences, found its place in the passage: "So success can't be defined any longer, or didn't... since it doesn't matter—can't really succeed or fail if you don't care." After the change, Lev explained that school achievement became a more important definition of success.

I knew [that the] better grades I graduate with better [the] chances I have of getting into a good university. ... Better core, better chances I have of ... not having to go to the army. Better chances I'd have of getting a job, in the field, that was probably the earlier years. Later on, once the private sector boomed, and

the state didn't hand out jobs any more, or apartments, or anything like that, you realize that you're going to be on your own. ... I didn't start to think about success 'til the later year. ... We were too young to think about [success], and by that time the private sector had expanded all ready and the Soviet Union had dissolved, and so by then I knew that I'm going to have to ... do something with my life, myself, and I can't rely on the system, I can't rely on a lot of things that my parents had relied on. ... [W]hen I was fourteen [years old] I started on the weekends, after school and on the weekend. I'd go to the Business School by the Academy of Economics and Law, and hated it, but I knew that was the place to be. If you wanted to be a businessman which was pretty much your only choice, either that or science, and starve, or get into the private sector and try to be a businessman. So, Business School was a reasonable... made sense and more than that. So... had to pay for that, again, but my parents could afford it so that was nice. ... [Y]ou can see that ... I was starting to do things, not because I wanted, not because ... [of] the system, it was because that was something to do ... in order to be successful later on. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

As Lev considered the definition of resilience, and how, or if, he fit into it, he constructed different notions of success: capitalist and communist. His success, according to his conceptual dialectic, seemed to stem from the communist construction, that is, the process of achieving a goal was more important than the achievement of that goal.

... [Y]ou think of success in terms of so many factors, right? I mean, you talk about being part of the society for example, having friends, acquaintances, having a number of good people that you communicate with. The idea is that you either have a large network of people socially or you have a small but really ... tight-knit group, that's success (Interviewer concurs). A lone person, a single person with no friends, no acquaintances, would not be described as successful, eh? So that's one thing. Education-wise, ... the more you succeed the more pleasant the process becomes. Lots of ... success, unless it's a freak coincidence, is the result of hard work. And none of us really like hard work, so success is that light shot of adrenaline, ... a good shot of positive, that makes the hard work worthwhile. ... I almost think of it in terms of a chemical dependency now—an addiction, being addicted to success. Lots of people are like that. ... [F]or my self, ... well I guess you can think of it in terms of the *capitalist* idea, and success versus the *communist* idea of success. I have a feeling that [with] the capitalist idea, it's very much that success is the goal. Not necessarily...[with the] communist idea. ...

Interviewer: Experience is the important part (Lev agrees) of the communist idea of success.

... I think so. ... Or at least they ... [Communists] play it that way. Whereas with the capitalist, ... there's always the idea of *the bottom line*, there is always the cost-benefit analysis. There is always the margins. ... [I]t's calculated success. Whereas the communist [idea] is full of emotions more than the math. ... [W]hich really is one of the reasons why a lot of times you look at success [of]

the old Eastern Block with the finance and really realizing it's nothing but propaganda, right? Whereas looking from the inside from Soviet Union ... at the Western world, bottom line, the mighty dollar, who cares how low, how inhuman, how horrible. ... [B]ut resilience, ... that idea, that premise seems to make sense to me.

Interviewer: That describes you, you think?

Yeah. I don't think it describes me, ... it gives an explanation to some of the successes that I may have had. Lots of things... it's experience, right? So you learn, it's a learning process, you learn to succeed, you learn to... you learn to succeed, period. There are certain things you do to improve your chances of success and there are certain things you know that are going to be bad for you, no matter what. Going to school—good thing. Learning a new language—good thing. Drinking too much, partying too much—not a good thing. ... You may be building the social aspect of your life but that's not the only one [aspect], ... there's a balance. And success, I think, is being able to keep that balance. ...

Interviewer: Did you succeed because of your experience in the school system? Or despite it?

I guess it depends on how much credit you want to give yourself. Right?

Interviewer: Well said.

...[As] much as it tried to break you, paradoxically, as hard as they try to break your back, they taught you how to have a backbone in the first place. At the same time, ... it's like ... a growing tree, I guess. ... [I]f it grows in a really calm place it's going to be pretty weak. Natural selection ... put it that way. ... If

you didn't have those challenges you wouldn't have learned how to succeed and you wouldn't have had those experiences that have helped you in life later on. Now, ... everything comes at a price, and lots of those experiences are subject or could be subject to a lovely session with a shrink for ... several years, but ... that's the price we pay for most of our experiences. Some good and some bad, and some you don't even notice, so ... I think I learned to succeed when I do ... because of that school system. I still believe that the Soviet education system was stronger than ... the Western one. Mandatory physics for example, mandatory chemistry, mandatory biology, you weren't given enough to become a nuclear scientist but you were given enough basic knowledge. Just like language, ... you may not use ... that exact knowledge in your everyday life, but I think it helped in building your analytical skills if nothing else. ... [B]eing able to learn and being able to learn something that you don't like. Lots of time in life you have to learn to do something, not because we want to but because it's part of the success. And you have to learn it whether you like it or not. ... I think the education system was stronger. So... to answer your question, ... the bottom line is I am where I am because of that. Good or bad. It's part of my history, part of my upbringing. And it has taught me lots of things, good things, bad things. It's life—it's experience. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

As the interview closed, Lev's understanding of success and resilience continued to emerge. He began to consider success and resilience in terms of goals, a route that a number of other participants followed as well.

Knowing myself, I need a challenge in order to succeed. Mild ADD, I need to be interested, I need to be ... I need to have a goal. I need to have a carrot dangled in front of me, in order to succeed. ... Nowadays, knowing that, I make challenges for myself because I know I have to, just because of the way I am. ... [W]hatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger, eh? ...

Interviewer: Were personal goals something that were supported in your schools?

... Because you care about [being] supported, they were encouraged ...

Interviewer: You talked about the difference between capitalist and communist success (Lev concurs) and that the capitalist ideal of success is the goal. And the communist ideal of success is the path that you follow on the way to the goal.

That's the feeling at the very least, ... it had to be measured somehow, right? You have to have some sort of a definition of success in order to be able to say whether or not you have succeeded (Interviewer agrees), A... B, to be able to tell when you have succeeded, when you've reached a certain goal. So yeah, [goals] were... supported. ... Just because they had to be there. On the other hand again, you take the example of the recycling newspapers. There was always some goal attached to it, be it beating the ... lower school, be it raising enough recycled newspaper to send to the poor children in Angola, ... [goals] had to be there. But they focused more on the process, the self, I think, more than the goal itself. In fact you look at it and you realize the goal was, most of the time, where most of the propaganda was. That's when it was the heaviest. The actual

process... used common sense. Hard work, team work, that is not much different. What's attached to that goal is what's different.

Interviewer: Mostly hidden agenda (Lev agrees), surrounding the process, and the goal was just the way of achieving that hidden agenda in a sense?

I guess it gave you a reason for hard work, team work ...

Interviewer: If Lenin's words were not enough...

And it was a great opportunity to play the propaganda card, ... exactly.

Interviewer: Is there anything else?

No. ... I don't think so. ... I look back on it and you ... to evaluate it [the old system] and it changes all the time. ... The one thing I do know is that it taught me a lot. It taught me for whatever reason, or they may have had the wrong ideas, but the things they teach you in the end are not much different from the Western moral—hard work, team work, analytical skills, the value of education, intelligence, I learned those things, ... something about them, maybe. Thanks to that system and despite of that system, all at the same time. Like I said, paradoxically, as much as they tried to break your back, they were also the ones that taught you how to have a backbone. If you had good parents, I guess. ... [S]omebody has to teach you those [morals and values]. While somebody's trying to break your back, there has to be somebody saying that ... you don't have to break down, you can stand up, rebel, for yourself, for your own good, for your own future. Have your own head, make your own decisions, right or wrong, and won't have anybody else to blame but you. And that's important. ... And that I

learned from my dad, more than the system. In a sense he used the system to teach me about the importance of being able to make your own decisions. Had it not been there, he may have not been as motivated to teach me about those thing. ... It's possible to go through life and succeed by default, ... but ... to me it matters how I get there. If I win a million bucks tomorrow it's not going to be as good as if I made my own million bucks over sometime in the future. ...

Interviewer: Built up success instead of success overnight?

Yeah. Even if you don't think of the time implications, whatever you retire with, ... twenty million in your account, it would be more important for me to ... make that money myself, versus inheriting it, or winning it, for myself. Nobody else. And ... the other thing ... growing up in that system had taught me is that it's not the collective conscience that keeps you up at night, it's your own conscience that screws up your sleep, you know? ... [I]f you want to make deals, make them with ... yourself. You are the person you have to live with for the rest of your life, the rest of them ... may give you ... public humiliating meetings and [make you] stand in front of the class. ... [I]t'll be humiliating but you'll sleep okay at night as long as you know that you didn't do anything wrong. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Lev brought the focus back to the individual self—a factor he considered key in the notion of success, despite external influences.

Synthesis

As the interviews progressed, and as the analysis developed, several

characteristics of the participants' experiences seemed to overlap—others, on the contrary, appeared individual and unique. In the paragraphs that follow, a synthesis of *similarities* and *dissimilarities* among the participants' experiences will be constructed. Drawing from the vernacular passages contained within pages previous, this synthesis will provide a vital link between the raw mind-flow and the emerging themes to be discussed in Chapter Five.

Following the similarities and dissimilarities, a section outlining so-called *absences* will examine what seemed, to the researcher, to be absent from the stories and consciousness of the participants. It is not, however, the intent of such a section to testify on behalf of participants who were not involved in this study. Rather, its purpose is more operational in nature—providing an account of what may be considered missing pieces, and perhaps yielding an inventory of questions for further research.

Similarities

In order to examine, compare and contrast the lived experience of research participants, one must first look to the building blocks of their experience. Recalling the work of Bronfenbrenner (1980), it is a mistake to consider that such building blocks are independent and unrelated. Rather, they are interconnected components of what Bronfenbrenner characterized as an *ecological system*. According to Bronfenbrenner, who adapted his own terminology from the work of Brim (1975), there are four *successive levels* within an ecological system: the *micro-system* (including the experience of home, classroom and playground), the *meso-system* (including the interactions among, but not exclusively among, family, religion, peers and school; the meso-system is a

collection of micro-systems), the *exo-system* (including social structures, obligations and responsibilities in the areas of community, family, neighbourhood, among others), and the *macro-system* (including systems of cultural and sub-cultural values and norms, laws and political system, networks of activity, socialization and motivation).

Using Bronfenbrenner's (1980) levels of ecological system as a point of departure, each of the three organizational sections, or areas of focus (school life, system change and resilience and success), from the participants' experiences presented earlier were concatenated through the drawing of similarities at each level. In effect, though perhaps a crude analogy, the paragraphs that follow contain the results of cross-referencing the individual participants' experiences within the areas of focus against the levels of their ecological systems experience.

It must be pointed out, however, that the use of Bronfenbrenner's (1980) levelling scheme does not imply that this study entertained or employed them to the end that Bronfenbrenner originally intended within the article from which these notions stem. That is to say, let there be no doubt that Bronfenbrenner's levels of ecological system were, for the purposes of this study, used exclusively as a framework, scope and structure around which the experiences of the participants could be synthesized, concatenated, compared and better understood.

School Life

The first focus areas under consideration was that of the school-based experiences of the participants. The experiences were somewhat informally divided into sub-categories including pre-school (participation in yasli and kindergarten), early years,

middle years and upper years. For the rare occasions when individuals discussed their university experiences in depth, these were included within the upper years sub-category.

Micro-Systems

At the micro-system level—the level concerned with the “immediate setting containing the learner” (Bronfenbrenner, 1980, p. 163)—a number of similarities of experience were found:

- All participants attended, though many sporadically, either yasli or kindergarten;
- All attended school for ten years after yasli or kindergarten and prior to entering a university;
- All were members of the Oktyabryata and Pioneers;
- All were members of a zvyozdochki or p'yatirki (the small division of “little stars”).

Meso-Systems

Meso-system level experiential similarities—those found within the “interrelations among the major settings containing the learner at a particular point in his or her life” (Bronfenbrenner, 1980, p. 163)—likewise appeared among the participants:

- All participated within Oktyabryata and Pioneer activities within the context of their school experience;
- Viktoriya, Ihor and Lev recalled interaction between their homes and their schools;

- On some level, all participants spoke about the interaction between their homes and peers, and schools and peers.

Exo-Systems

According to Bronfenbrenner (1980), “[t]he *exo-system* is an extension of the meso-system embracing the concrete social structures, both formal and informal, that impinge upon or encompass the immediate settings containing the learner and, thereby, influence and even determine or delimit what goes on there” (p. 163, emphasis in original). Within the experiences of this study’s participants, similarities did appear at this level, especially when looking deeper into Bronfenbrenner’s meaning.

These [concrete social] structures include the major institutions of the society, both deliberately structured and spontaneously evolving, as they operate at the local community level. These encompass, among others, the world of work, the neighborhood [*sic*], mass media, agencies of government (local, state, [*sic*] and national), the distribution of goods and services, communication and transportation facilities, and informal social networks. (Bronfenbrenner, 1980, p. 163)

- All participants recalled participating within the political spectrum of the Oktyabryata and Pioneers. For all, this seemed meaningless. Dmytro recalled standing guard aside the school’s bust of Lenin. When asked what it meant to him, he replied, “[N]othing, just getting tired of standing... No, it was really boring and you couldn’t talk to anybody, you

had to salute to others and just stand like that for two hours. So ... your hand and arm got sore.” Viktoriya recalled how the values that were taught in Okyabryeta were good. “For me it wasn’t like Oktyabryata or Communisty Party, ‘I have to be Communist,’ or ‘I have to be good because the Communist told me to,’ but just... the message was good.” Ihor compared the political meeting sessions to meetings everywhere, “mostly for me, somehow, it was quite boring”;

- All participants were driven by academic performance—even Oleksandr, who stated that “you’re rewarded with your marks but marks ... obviously they mean nothing.” Lev, who recalled being disinterested in the system, still felt driven by academic performance because of what it meant to his father;
- Each participant made reference to the interest that his or her parents took in their academic career. For some, their parents helped them to enter a particular school; for others, support was provided at home by way of helping with homework. Whatever the displayed support, there appeared to be a genuine positive academic influence on all participants stemming from their home lives.

Macro-Systems

The macro-system includes “the carriers of information and ideology that, both explicitly and implicitly, endow meaning and motivation to particular agencies, social networks, roles, activities, and their interrelations” (Bronfenbrenner, 1980p. 163). For

the purposes of this study, relationships, the treatment and mistreatment of individuals by other elements of the system, were significant.

- For each participant, save Oleksandr, one gained a sense that the social system present within their schooling gave them no direct advantage. In many cases, it was a direct disadvantage. For Dmytro, the system/ideology present during his early and middle years did not support the religious convictions of his family. In the cases of Ihor and Lev, the system/ideology was described as something that should be mistrusted, and abused when necessary;
- Their early school experiences, in all cases save Lev, provided them with the opportunity to become well acquainted with a caring adult—namely, their teacher for the first three years of school;
- Their personal relationships seemed, again with the exception of Lev, void of system/ideologically driven motivations;
- Their early and middle school years experiences, in all cases, were void of economically driven motivations;
- For all participants, school-based social organization (including Oktyabryata, Pioneers and sports teams) provided an environment in which one could belong, and through which values could be instilled.

System Change

Throughout the examination of the meaning participants made of their experiences within all-encompassing social and political change, Bronfenbrenner's

(1980) levels of ecological system continued to be employed.

Micro-Systems

- No participants experienced a micro-system change. In other words, none of the “immediate settings containing the learner” (Bronfenbrenner, 1980, p.163) appeared to have been structurally or existentially altered. Each participant remained within the same family, school, and neighbourhood.

Meso-Systems

- None of the participants appeared to have experienced a change in the relationships between and among their micro-system elements. Their schools continued to communicate with their families; their commentary in no way suggested that their families did not continued to participate in neighbourhood activities to the same degree as they previously had;
- Each participant discontinued their participation in Oktyabryata and Pioneer activities.

Exo-Systems

- Each participant’s discontinuation of participation in Oktyabryata and Pioneers was accounted for by the disbanding of these organizations at national levels;
- All participants encountered a change in the politicization of their school-based experiences;

- Each participants recognized a level of confusion in some school-based activities. Viktoriya spoke at length about the confusion experienced in her history classroom and Dmytro explained how literature discussed in Ukrainian and Russian classes were no long relevant;
- All participants were affected by a change in the “distribution of goods and services” (Bronfenbrenner, 1980, p.163). Ihor recalled how their family budgeting meant that they could not longer eat meat with the frequency they once had. He shared sentiments with Lev, who discussed the nature of the attraction of new, western, products. Many of the other experiences at this level were a function of macro-system experiences with systemic economic change.

Macro-Systems

- All participants experienced the influence of economic change. Without exception, each participant recognized the debilitating nature of the hyperinflation and fiscal insecurity of the time. Many spoke of its influence on their meso-systems. Viktoriya outlined the consequences of the economic change on demographic cohorts, “[A] lot of younger people went into that direction, ... buy and sell. And their kids are totally different than us, ... than we were, because for them, at that point, everything was coming easily.” ... “I could see that on my sister’s ... fellow students, whose parents were ... businessmen.” ... “It was impossible for elderly people to adjust because they’ve lived all their lives

in a totally different world, ... market economy. ... You just can't get used to it. ... [B]ut people in their forties, and I'd say thirties, they were most successful." Oleksandr illustrated his experiences learning to buy and sell products on hockey trips to Poland.

- Many of the participants described how the change influenced the nature of their political understanding. For Lev, the change meant that the ideology behind his disinterest in *buying into the system*, so to speak, was no longer present. For Dmytro, the ideologically-based religious discrimination his family had suffered disappeared.
- A number of the participants portrayed their understanding of the social support changes. Lev and Ihor discussed the inability to rely on governmental support for work, transportation and housing. Viktoriya recalled the difficulties experienced by elderly people living on fixed pensions during times of hyperinflation;
- Ihor saw the change as being more *global*—outside of his or his family's direct control. He believed that *locally*—within his own or his family's locus of control—changes were not really dramatic. He recalled his father's comment upon hearing the news of the coup, "okay, what can we do? Let's go swimming." From the general opinions expressed by others within the group, one may surmise that they would seem to generally agree with such a sentiment and categorization.

Resilience and Success

As the meaning that participants made of their resilience and success was examined, once again Bronfenbrenner's (1980) levels of ecological system assisted in the organization of similarities found.

Micro-Systems

- All participants experienced success in similar locales. All described successful experiences within their schools. Viktoriya, Dmytro and Oleksandr described success within the context of extra-curricular or sportive experiences;
- Resilience seemed to involve experiences in school or in the home.

Meso-Systems

- Viktoriya suggested that values related to social support and academic success she learned within Oktyabryata were similar to those experienced in her home. The experiences of the other participants build a similar picture of familial values in these areas appearing in school and Oktyabryata or Pioneer activities.

Exo-Systems

- Most participants described how their "homeroom" teachers were responsible for their school-based success, and how if an individual were having difficulties, their homeroom teacher would first contact their

parents. Viktoriya and Lev described how teachers had the power to further contact their parents' workplaces if improvement was not detected;

- All participants, save Lev, expressed positive sentiments regarding their experiences in the care of a single teacher for the first three years of their schooling;
- All participants suggested that their experiences within sports teams or Oktyabrata and Pioneers, and specifically their grouping into little stars, provided them with a place in which they could belong, especially in the early and middle years;
- Many participants connected their resilience in the face of all-encompassing change to the internal strength and support of their families and friends.

Macro-Systems

- Though only directly expressed by Lev, all participants saw their resilience within a milieu of all-encompassing economic, social and political change as an experience most accurately described as an *opportunity* rather than a *stressor*.

Dissimilarities

In a few cases, quite apparent differences were seen between the experiences of one or two participants and the experience of the majority. The comparison and contrast of experiences that follows did not seek as its purpose to diminish an individual

experience simply because of its dissimilarity with the experience of the majority. In fact, quite the opposite is true. The end of such a pursuit was to ensure that outlying experiences were not neglected through what is known in political science circles as a tyranny of the majority. Likewise, from a researcher's point of view, the outlying experience was not seen as a factual *fifth column*—it was neither considered subversive, an act of sabotage nor an indication of methodological error. Rather, the outlier provided a caution in the face of conclusionary complacency: experiences do not fit into convenient packages.

As was the case within the section that preceded, Bronfenbrenner's (1980) levels of ecological system shall be organizationally employed, as required, throughout the following areas of focus.

School Life

Micro-Systems

- Each participant came from different families and therefore the exact nature of their familial experience is undoubtedly unique;
- Each participant similarly attended different schools. Some specialized during their middle years in schools that focused on humanities, others on science. Lev and Dmytro specialized into schools directed toward the induction of foreign language.
- Oleksandr's schooling, from a very early age, involved a great deal of sportive activity. This experience rests outside of the school-based experiences of others in his cohort.

Meso-Systems

- No discernible differences were found in the ways in which each participant's micro-systems interacted. Specifically, no differences were perceived within family – school relations.

Exo-Systems

- Oleksandr's experiences as an athlete within a system that prized athletic talent led him to hold a different understanding of his school experience. His descriptions of the difference in expectations for academic performance and the latitude granted him by his teachers were quite unique within the group;
- Dmytro's story about his sister's experience with religious intolerance and the adjustment of her grades is noticeably different from the experiences of any other participant. He was also the only member of the participant cohort to have discussed religious affiliation and the difficulties it presented within an *officially* atheistic society and school system;
- Lev's experiences in school, as being marked as a troublemaker, are likewise unique. The meaning he makes of the experiences raises interesting and inimitable issues when examined at the macro-system level.

Macro-Systems

- Lev's commentary regarding his disinterest in the system seemed outside

of the experiences of the others. The others seemed to tacitly accept the “meaning and motivation [behind] particular agencies, social networks, roles, activities and their interrelations” (Bronfenbrenner, 1980, p. 163). Lev, on the contrary, only accepted these when he felt it within his personal interest;

- The experiences of Ihor, upon first glance, may have been considered similar to Lev’s. However, his foray beyond the “overarching institutions of ... education” (Bronfenbrenner, 1980, p. 163), when he mischievously gained entry into the school of his choice, was quite different. Where Lev disassociated himself lest he felt it beneficial, Ihor lived within the rules until he felt them too constrictive and saw benefit in breaking them.

System Change

Micro-Systems

- No perceived differences appeared between the experiences of the participants at the micro-system level.

Meso-Systems

- No perceived differences appeared between the experiences of the participants at the meso-systems level.

Exo-Systems

- Oleksandr appeared to be the sole participant to engage in primitive

entrepreneurship. All other participants maintained the status quo. Dmytro discussed the rarity with which Soviet adolescents engaged in part-time jobs, and Viktoriya described how all of her financial affairs were in the hands of her parents at that age.

Macro-Systems

- Each participant naturally encountered the change in different ways but ultimately, no participant stood out as supporting a return to pre-change ecological states.

Resilience and Success

Micro-Systems

- Many of Oleksandr's successes appeared to take place within the context of his hockey team participation, outside of his school and family locales. Likewise, many of his early positive experiences and relationships with adults—something seen as significant to resilient development by Rutter (1985) and Richardson (2002)—rested within a team environment.

Meso-Systems

- No discernible differences appeared between the participants' interrelationships of micro-system locales.

Exo-Systems

- Again, Oleksandr's support mechanisms tended to sit within his social contact with team members and coaches. This was seen within his recollection of his encounter with a school bully.

Macro-Systems

- Members of the participant cohort seemed to fall within one or both of two camps with the meaning they made of their macro-system level experiences with success and resilience. For some, resilience was understood as the functional state of long-held and unchanging familial values within the context of a dysfunctional society. Others saw their resilience as being a result of previous experience within a society changing in a drawn manner, at times displaying greater dysfunction than the eventual collapse. In other words, they were prepared for, and had learned to adapt to, nearly any change thrown in their path.

Absences

Perhaps the most striking absence within the data collected through this study was that of a strong finding that the major social, political and economic change was an unequivocal and instant indication of significant change within the participants' experiences. In all cases, the seemingly instinctive answer relayed on the immediate beat following the question, "what did the change mean to you?" was a comment indicative of nothingness. Only after deeper investigation were meanings revealed.

Another point interestingly absent within the data collected was that all participants believed that they were both successful and resilient. No participant indicated that they were only one, or neither. Likewise absent was any indication that the participants' experiences post-change was any more difficult in than their pre-change experiences.

Summary

It has been the purpose of this chapter to present the results of data collected through the semi-structured conversational interviewing of five post-Soviet students as to the retrospective meaning they made of their experiences within the context of all-encompassing social and political change. Each interview was presented within the somewhat artificial, pre-analysis, constructed topic areas of *School Life*, *System Change* and *Resilience and Success*. After each participant's story was presented, a synthesis of experiential similarities and differences was developed. Through the course of the interviews, and as the analysis of each participant's words, thoughts, stories and consciousness progressed, thematic trails began to emerge from the data. Each of these trails wove between and among the notions of school life, system change and resilience and success presented. They similarly wove among the experiential levels of their ecological system. In Chapter Five, the refined themes that were discovered are analysed against the framework presented within Chapter Two—the combined models of change and resiliency.

CHAPTER FIVE

Emerging Themes, Reconceptualization and Discussion

To begin any discussion of data collected, it seems fitting to return once again to the major literary components upon which the context and underpinning of this study is based. Chapter Two provided a discussion of several key components envisioned as fundamental to a study of this nature: notions of all-encompassing social change—including both drawn and moment; the experience of such social change on educational systems; success and resilience—including foundational work in the area by Flach (1988), Richardson (2002), Richardson et al. (1990) and Rutter (1985; 1999); and both the Soviet and post-Soviet experience. It seems natural, therefore, to begin with a reflection of the participants' experiences within each of these frames. As this chapter continues, themes that have emerged from the data will be discussed, followed by a collection of ruminations related to areas seen as deserving further research.

Change Revisited

The primary question one must ask relates to the development of our understanding of change. Has this research presented a new collection of experiences outside of those currently held? To answer such a question requires more than a simple binary response. To be sure, this study presents a new collection of individual and unique voices, exploring the responses of youth to change on a grand scale. In doing so, it yields an addition to the collected knowledge surrounding change, and specifically non-investigative change within education.

Presenting the reminiscent experiences of individuals within a change of this type has explored the belief put forward by Moore (1963) that a *singular theory of change* simply does not exist. Similarly, the differences in the experiences of each participant seem to strengthen Fullan's (2000) argument that "[t]heories of change can guide thinking and action, ...but the reality of complexity tells us that each situation will have a degree of uniqueness in its history and makeup which [*sic*] will cause unpredictable differences to emerge" (p. 21). What emerges is a responsibility to revisit the theories presented in Chapter Two surrounding the nature of change and to examine their guiding value.

Drawn Change

The individual experiences within drawn change highlight some interesting insights into the expression of drawn change within the Soviet Union under the policies of glasnost', as well as the very nature of drawn social and political change within the context of school life. At first glance, the theory presented within Chapter Two appears to quite unequivocally hold true to the experiences of the participant cohort. Indeed, Smith's (1976) discussion of transitive changes as "the outcome of human plans and intentions" (pp. 24-25), of which examples include "a regime implementing reforms in local government taxation, synods adopting a new liturgy and ritual, or businessmen introducing new sales policies" (p. 25), appears to be consistent with the perestroika and glasnost' experience. Perestroika and glasnost' were both *the outcomes* of Gorbachev's *plans and intentions*. Likewise, there did appear to be a gradual difference in the relationships of individuals, groups, communities and societies—a concept obtained from

Moore (1963). Yet, more interestingly, the experiences depicted by the participants suggest that other components presented in Chapter Two fall short of consistence.

All participants within this study described their school-based experience at the time of the perestroika and glasnost' change as either confusing or freeing. In either case, the knowledge at the time that change surrounded them suggested that the participants were very much aware of the change process—contradicting the notions pulled from Whyte (1974) that participants of drawn change do not themselves really understand that they have changed, or that the world around them has, as well. Further to this point, implications that the perestroika and glasnost' movements were evolutionary in nature seemed to overstep the experiences of the participant cohort. Harper's (1989) discussion of structural and cultural trends suggests that as we engage in relationships with others, we slowly and unknowingly adapt along the social structure that surrounds us. Yet, each participant understood their situation and appeared to have adapted as necessary. So then, one must look elsewhere for a definition of the experiences found during the perestroika and glasnost' period.

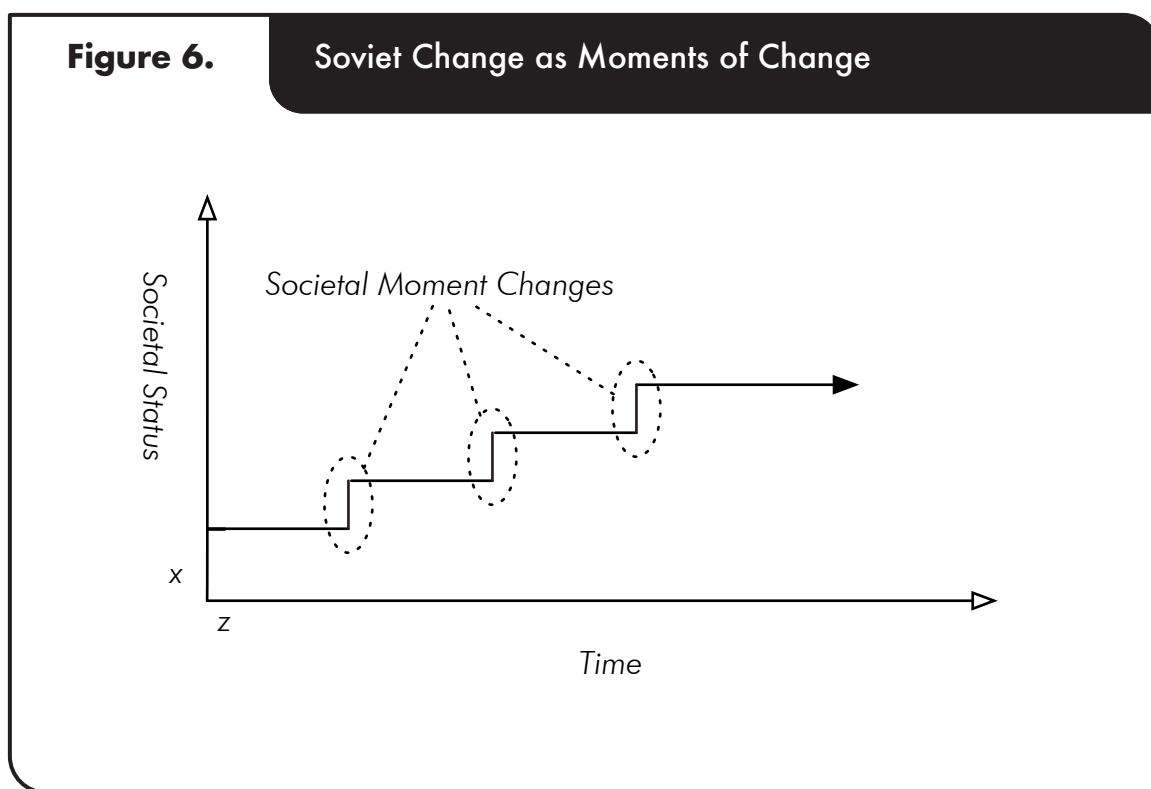
Moment Change

To revisit moment change is to find the place in which the participants' experiences reside. Stacey (1992) describes change in a way that more accurately depicts the nature of the participants' experiences.

The situation is ambiguous, and the responses ... are equivocal. In these uniquely new situations, old shared mental models showing how to design actions do not

work; new mental models have to be developed and shared before anything can happen. ...

The unpredictability of specific events within fuzzy categories, which is the hallmark of open-ended change, leads to ambiguity and confusion. Although human minds are well equipped to deal with such situations, the situations remain difficult because they require developing new mental models through analogical reasoning. (Stacey, 1992, pp. 156-157)



The refined model that should be used to describe the perestroika and glasnost' experiences of the participant cohort is one of multiple moment change events rather than a single drawn change—each moment change being more or less mediocre in magnitude

and representing a single change in status quo at a social, political and economic level (Figure 6). Stacey (1992) goes on to suggest that the magnitude of a moment change is key in understanding the individual's response to it. "Links between cause and effect are lost in the detail of those events because small changes escalate and self-reinforcing circles appear" (p. 156). Historical evidence of this can be found within the example of the Komsomol's demise. The Komsomol became a strong nationally political proponent of the increased development of freedoms under perestroika and glasnost'. Ironically, the collapse of the Soviet Union spelt the end of the Komsomol (Sweeney, 1993).

The participant experiences surrounding the dissolution of the Soviet Union complemented the conceptualization of moment change presented by Conner (1993): crisis.

A crisis is the point at which it becomes apparent that what we had planned is no longer feasible and our expectations are disrupted ... [I]f it is a significant departure from what we expected, a crisis ensues because ambiguity enters the situation. (p. 28)

Each participant identified the dissolution change as a departure from the *status quo*, but was it in fact a departure from what was expected? Sztompka (1994) refers to such *disruptions* as *transformation*. In recalling his words, the experiences of the participant cohort seemed to emerge again: "Such changes may be conceived as touching the core of social reality, as their repercussions are usually to be felt in all aspects of social life, transforming its overall quality" (p. 19). All participants described the difficulties and hardships found within their macro-systems in the aftermath of the dissolution, and all

descriptions suggested that a broad-based transformation did occur in the quality of their social realities.

Education within the Context of Social and Political Change

Chapter Two outlines the nature of LaBelle and Ward's (1990) evaluation of seven countries' education-based experiences within the context of all-encompassing social and political change. The countries LaBelle and Ward discuss (Algeria, China, Cuba, Ethiopia, Iran, Mozambique and Nicaragua) differ from the Soviet Union and its post-change independent constituents. Where each of the states LaBelle and Ward discussed encountered a transformation from a previous ideology into a socialist or social-theocratic based ideology, the post-Soviet republics from which the participants in this study came experienced the reverse. Having said this, a comparison of the school-based experiences of participants within this study against the research-based commentary presented in LaBelle and Ward is of value.

To recall, LaBelle and Ward (1990) studied pre- and post-transformation education systems and the effects of transformation on governance, access, streaming, curriculum, personnel, language of instruction, and literacy. Clearly, it is not possible to compare a number of their findings with the findings of this study—the purposes of the two studies are distinct. Yet in some cases, the participants within this study do make some commentary on contexts similar to those examined by LaBelle and Ward. For example, where LaBelle and Ward found that “[f]ollowing a transformation, most countries did increase access, both by expanding systems and by altering the rules of entry” (p. 104), Lev recalled his own experience with a tuition-based college in the post-

change era, and Dmytro remarked at how new educational institutions provided new educational opportunities. Similarly, a number of participants recalled experiences with new types of schools, although these were more commonly discussed within the context of the perestroika and glasnost' time.

Where LaBelle and Ward (1990) found that members of the former ruling class were able to maintain pockets of influence within the post-transformation system, the participants in this study did not suggest that former members of the Komsomol or children of Communist Party members were in anyway penalized for their previously held influence. Indeed, their experiences supported the notion that few positions were *reshuffled* in the post-Soviet era. Where LaBelle and Ward found active education campaigns based on the development of “new kinds of citizens” (p. 105), none of the participants detailed remarks that such campaigns were found within their experience.

Resilience Revisited (Part One)

Recall the work of Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) wherein the argument was made that survival and endurance “under conditions of adversity” (p. 5) are functions of two traits: the personal traits possessed by the individual, and the traits of their community. To be sure, the experiences of the participants in this study confirm Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's supposition. One is unable to separate any participant from their community—all participants spoke of their experiences before, during and after the change in relation to their families, friends and teachers. Perhaps the most prominent personal trait that emerged from within this study was optimism, especially within the stories, commentary and meaning found throughout all participant interviews.

This concurs with the opinions of Peterson (2000), who believed that optimism provides a “freedom from trauma” (p. 44).

A discussion of resilience, as was shown in Chapter Two, often includes a discussion of the notion *at-risk*. So, the question must be put, are these participants considered at-risk? Certainly not, according to the definition presented by McMillan (1992). At-risk students tend to exist within “a complex interplay of a multitude of variables—home, school and societal—that” ... “result in the failure of these children to graduate from high school, attain work skills and become productive members of society” (p. 4). Though all participants completed their schooling and were employed or pursuing university (if not advanced university) degrees at the time of the study, and all likewise could be considered *productive members of society*, this does not imply that they may be excluded from this definition. For at the time of the change, all participants were involved within what may be understood as a complex interplay of personal, familial, social, political and economic variables. Each of variables, to varying degrees, experienced instability and placed obstacles that encumbered participants. For this reason, one may conclude that all participants were at-risk at the time of the change.

The Resiliency Model (Part One)

Within their model of resiliency, Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002) begin by analysing the state of being for a particular individual’s experience. They claim that an individual enters their model, as explained in Chapter Two, “at any point in time when a person has adapted to her/his situation in life” (Richardson, 2002, p. 310). This *adapted* state of being is called *biopsychospiritual homeostasis*. In the cases of the

participants within this study, all participants were apparently adapted to their situation prior to the change event, and were therefore within a state of biopsychospiritual homeostasis.

Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson (2002) go on to discuss the nature of events or experiences that disrupt their homeostatic state—life experiences, needs, “stressors, adversity, opportunities” (Richardson, 2002, p. 311) and other changes of various magnitudes. The participant cohort in this study encountered all of these in the aftermath of the change. Economic, social and educational stress; needs; changes and adversity challenged each of them in different ways and to different degrees. For some, these were personal challenges, for others they were a combination of familial and personal challenges—and all within their ecological exo- and, to a lesser extent, macro-system levels. The differences in the extent or degrees to which each participant was affected by a challenge appeared to follow Richardson and Richardson et al.’s model’s *protective factor* component.

Protective factors are support systems that shield an individual from stress, needs adversity and other challenges. Chapter Two details examples of protective factors Richardson et al. (1990), Richardson (2002), Rutter (1985) and Garmezy et al. (1984) discuss as a result of their own research. Within this study, the analysis of participants’ comments related to their own experience following the change identified a number of potential protective factors. Nearly universal among them were five factors: family, past experience and examples, internal vs. external locus of control, stability of ecological micro- and meso-system levels, and perceptions of the change as an opportunity. Indeed, it is at this point that themes within the collected data began to emerge, and it is therefore

appropriate to step outside of this re-visitation of the components of Chapter Two. Within the paragraphs that follow these five protective factors will be examined in detail. Following this thematic examination, the researcher will return to this, as yet, unfinished discussion of the conceptual framework.

Theme: Family Morals Haven't Changed

Each participant within the study identified their families as a support mechanism within their lives. For Oleksandr, his family was both a support for and an example of how one behaves and the obligations and responsibilities one has. For Dmytro, the youngest of the participants, his parents protected him from the economic difficulties. Viktoriya's family helped each other out, and shared values similar to those she drew from her experience as an Oktyabryenok. Ihor supported his family with the money he collected from an academic scholarship; Lev, from whom the title of this theme originates, realized that no matter the change around you, everything you know and understand about the familial expectations surrounding you do not change.

Just because the country is on this road to glasnost' and perestroika, the family rules, the household rules, the household morals were still there and they haven't changed and they would never, and they're there to this day. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Family, for this collection of adolescents at that time, provided a number of protective factors. First of all, basic physiological, safety and social needs were in some manner addressed within strong and functional families (Maslow, 1968). It can be

discerned that each participant was the product of a functional and healthy family. Second, consistent familial values and expectations provided not only stability within the emergence of new macro-system societal, economic and political values, but they also provided long-term precedent and goals, of a sort, for behaviour. To put the point simply, the experience of a strong and healthy family prior to and during a stress of the nature examined within this study served to provide short- and long-term satisfaction of basic needs, and held individuals accountable to the expectations encountered in their past.

Theme: Past Experience and Examples

As the researcher reflected on the questions presented to the participant cohort involved within this study, it was fitting that each individual was invited to recall their memories of experience within the context of all-encompassing change. One rather large theme that emerged from a study of experiences within change through the lenses of resilience and success surrounded the notion that the past experiences of the participants, and examples of behaviours or situations seen by the participants throughout their lives, provided protective factors that empowered their resilience and were key in their definitions of success.

To dissect this rather verbose claim, one must begin from the premise that these participants used (unknowingly at the time) their past experiences to give them comfort, direction and stability in the face of the change surrounding them. The nature of this theory is partially based on the theme discussed previously, relating to the stability of their families and homes. Each participant knew that they could trust their families to

provide the same support and stability that was experienced at previous points throughout their lives. Moreover, participants used their past experiences to assess the stability of situations around them—the *adaptability* so many of them noted they possessed.

Similarly, Oleksandr and Lev in particular used the examples of other individuals to guide their actions. In Oleksandr's case, his father imparted examples of what should be done, and some of his hockey team mates provided examples of what should not.

I just... didn't want to... [end] up on the street. ... Actually, I have seen examples of some other guys from the [hockey] team, older guys, they can't go on the ice without having shot[s] of alcohol, half a bottle, at least. ... [T]hat's why (laughter), ... I consider them to be incomplete, like losers. And the thing is, they were talented guys, but if they would put some more effort [into their] work, they can make it far, but... [the] thing is, their goals in life were... none, I guess (chuckles). And [it's] probably having goals that would help you recover—knowing what you want. (Oleksandr, personal communication, June 6, 2003)

In Lev's case, he used examples and experiences to guide what was *reasonable* behaviour during the change.

[I]t's experience, right? ... [I]t's a learning process, you learn to succeed, ... you learn to succeed, period. There are certain things you do to improve your chances of success and there are certain things you know that are going to be bad for you, no matter what. Going to school—good thing. Learning a new language—good thing. Drinking too much, partying too much—not a good thing. You know? You may be building the social aspect of your life but that's not the only one, ...

there's a balance. And success, I think, is being able to keep that balance. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Lev's linking of experience to success was one instance where a participant drew the conclusion that their definition of success was more heavily based on experience than achievement. The distinction Lev drew between *communist* and *capitalist* notions of success was another instance. Dmytro linked success to experiences of participation in a number of activities. Viktoriya described the experience of trying one's best as a definition of success, and she explained that driving yourself crazy was not worth the achievement; Ihor concurred with Viktoriya. What is most striking about this particular point is its statement in contradiction to a commonly western-held belief that success and achievement are only valid within the confines of a *test score-based* definition.

Themes: What can we do? Let's go swimming.

The key to understanding the responses of this study's participants seemed to be found within the meaning they made of their experiences vis-à-vis their locus of control. This was perhaps best illustrated by Ihor's story about where he was at the time of the coup.

[W]e were on vacation so I remember ... huge crowds on the ... squares, ... where there were some megaphones with radio translations. I remember people having green faces, like everybody was ... shocked or ... preoccupied of what was going on there, but well we just listened for it... bits and then my father said, "okay, what can we do? Let's go swimming." So, we did. We just ignored

mostly whole thing. And then a couple of days, of course, all resolved. ...

[S]omehow it didn't touch us too much. We were on vacation so we just enjoyed ourselves. (Ihor, personal communication, July 7, 2003)

Ihor's father, in eight words—"okay, what can we do? Let's go swimming"—established locus of control as a protective factor in Ihor's understanding of the situation. Doing so clearly divided the world, for Ihor, into *local* and *global* concerns; not dissimilar to Bronfenbrenner's (1980) separation of ecological system levels. For Ihor, this meant that local concerns were those over which one had some measure of control—an internal locus of control; global were those that extended beyond the control of the individual—macro-system level concerns. Put another way, why be worried about something that could not be helped? It is better to focus on those situations where worry may have parlayed into feasible action. For other participants, this likely tacit understanding of differences in locus of control may explain their intuitive declarations that the change meant nothing. Understandably so, since their micro- and meso-system levels did not really change in negative ways.

Theme: Macro- and Meso-System Level Stability

Viewed through Bronfenbrenner's (1980) ecological system framework, the experiences at the exo-system levels during the time of change may be interpreted as positive—tolerance of Dmytro's religious affiliation; Dmytro, Viktoriya, Ihor and Lev's comments about the new (non-politicized) curriculum; and Oleksandr's ability to travel and leave Ukraine. Positive as they may be, the changes the participants described did not permeate the macro- and meso-system levels. To repeat a statement made earlier

within the previous chapter, none of the participants' immediate settings, or experiences of interrelationships between their immediate settings, changed during the coup and dissolution of the Soviet Union. It is perhaps outside of this study's participants' experiences, therefore, to continue referring to the change as *all-encompassing*, since, in fact, it was not.

The stability of the participants' immediate settings can only be described, within the context of this study's conceptual framework, as a protective factor. Though all participants described some *difference* in their schools, their relationships with teachers, textbooks, classrooms, reading, writing, mathematics, history, language, science did not change. The differences they did describe exist within the exo- and macro-system ecological levels: the removal of politically irrelevant material and increased student confidence—pushing their teachers beyond previously established points of behavioural tolerance. Fundamentally, however, in all cases, school-based change did not occur.

Theme: Change was exciting!

The claim made by this theme's title is not a difficult one to envision from the stories and memories the participants shared. For each participant, after digging below the surface, into the meaning they made of their experience within change, one finds that change meant opportunity. Lev responded to that very suggestion.

That's right, yeah, exactly. Yeah, that's... that's exactly it. That's exactly it. You were given the chance to do something that you wanted. Whether or not it was good for you didn't matter. You did it because it felt good. (Lev, personal communication, July 8, 2003)

Returning to the conceptual framework employed by this study, the fact that it *felt good* must be considered a protective factor. Other participants explained the educational opportunities that arose following the change. Viktoriya and Dmytro described how people returned to school, to better their opportunities for employment. Lev described how new schools opened, and Ihor and Oleksandr commented on the opportunities individuals had to make more money—for better or for worse.

Using Bronfenbrenner's (1980) ecology system levels to analyse the commentary of the participants within this theme, one may appreciate the social confusion present at the time. From the outside in, so to speak, the macro-system level was in the midst of drastic realignment. Social, political and economic structures were unstable and in some ways collapsing. Individuals holding ample power, cunning or resources began to use the expiring system to their advantage, showing that a new and different path was possible. From Lev and Dmytro's email accounts, a culture of dreamers emerged; this was a cult of opportunity, tempered by fear that the worst was yet to come. The question therefore arises, did the opportunity overshadow the fear enough that individuals—the participants in this study, for example—were empowered by a social protective factor at the exo- and macro-system levels?

Resilience Revisited (Part Two)

Having established the thematic protective factors that emerged from the data collected within this study, the discussion now returns to the discussion that preceded the interlude.

The Resiliency Model (Part Two)

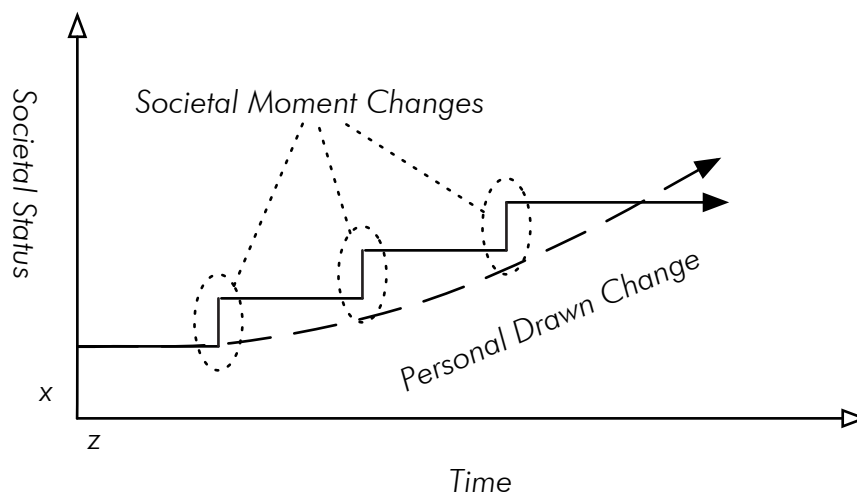
At the conclusion of the first section that bears the same name, a discussion of protective factors was unfolding. Returning to this discussion, aided by the emergent thematic protective factors discussed in the pages prior, one may find similarities between those themes and Richardson et al.'s (1990) psychological and spiritual protective factors described in Chapter Two: “[g]ood self esteem[,] ...[g]ood decision making skills[,] ...[i]nternal locus of control[,] ...[s]elf confidence[,] ...[g]ood sense of humor[,] ...[i]ndependence of spirit[, and] ...[p]ositive futuristic vision” (p. 36), among others. Furthermore, similarities may also be found within the work of Garnezy et al. (1984) on the subject, likewise described in Chapter Two: socioeconomic status, and familial and ecological support systems. For these particular participants, protective factors seemed to include the stability of their micro- and meso-system levels (family life and school life); their tacit understanding of locus of control (an acceptance of their inability to direct or orchestrate their exo- and macro-system level experiences); their belief, based on an exo- and macro-system level belief, that the future would be better than the present (a positive or optimistic futuristic vision); their past experience within change (years of adaptation exercises surrounding changes related to the perestroika and glasnost’ movements within the structured social, political and economic milieu that was the Soviet single-party controlled system); the social values and support they gained through participation in youth organizations, sports, and early positive bonds with a caring adult/teacher (save Lev, who’s internal strength of character seemed to compensate for his early difficulties); among others.

Disruption of one's biopsychospiritual homeostasis occurs, according to Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson's (2002) model, when the weakness of protective factors appear. Based on the accounts and memories of the participants in this study, the broader changes they experienced (including perestroika, glasnost', the coup and the collapse of the Soviet Union) did not appear to cause significant disruption to their homeostasis—however noticeably, some disruption did occur. For if no disruption had occurred, one could assume that the participants' memories would be void of meaning made. This was not the case for these participants, to be sure! However, questions remained related to the earlier discussion of the nature of change experienced in light of this understanding of the nature of disruption experienced.

Change and Disruption

Returning to a discussion briefly encountered earlier within this chapter's sections devoted to change, with the suggestion that none of the change events experienced by the participants (perestroika, glasnost', the coup and the collapse of the Soviet Union) could be considered to be examples of drawn change, a question surfaces related to the magnitude of each moment change and the degree to which these changes disrupted the participants' biopsychospiritual homeostases. Examined from a number of levels, this question further enlightened one's understanding of the nature of the participants' experiences. Take, for example, the state directed school-based changes experienced during the time of perestroika and glasnost', as outlined within Chapter Two and throughout the participants' commentary (including a revision of history texts and material). Within the context of the participants' micro- and meso-system levels, literally

no change could be observed. At their exo- and macro-system levels, the changes that did occur were tempered on one side by the continued strong state control of political and economic spheres, and on the other by the social *Zeitgeist* of optimism for the future. Disruption was, in a sense, severely diminished—or perhaps more accurately, protective factors at a number of levels controlled the disruption’s magnitude. Furthermore, it seemed reasonable to suggest that the tightness of control at the exo- and macro-system levels was greater in the earlier stages of perestroika and glasnost’ development than nearer to the end. In fact, by all accounts within the literature, the fear that control by the state of the changes was being lost appeared to have been the motive behind the coup conspirator’s actions in August 1991 (Rudnev & Yakov, 1993; Slater, 1993).

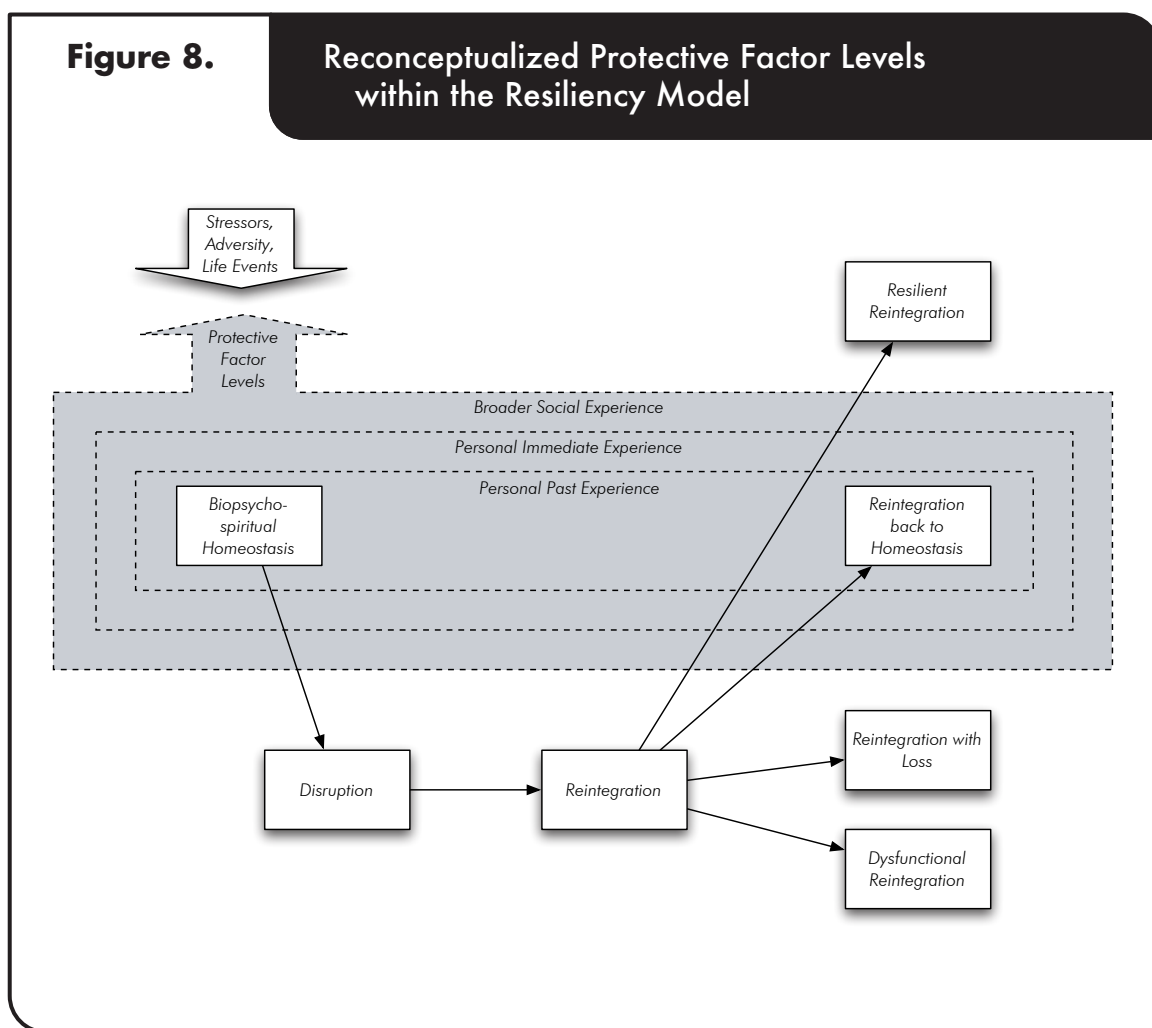
Figure 7.**Participant Change Experience**

As each state-directed change was carefully implemented, the third level of protective factors surrounding the participants in this study developed: their experience within change events. Based upon the Resiliency Model, as it stands, the slow increase in exo- and macro-system level disruption allowed for participants to be better prepared for their next disruptive experience (likely marginally more disruptive). In effect, perestroika and glasnost' based experiences could be considered a training ground for resiliency required, unbeknownst at the time, at a later date (August – December 1991, and after). Furthermore, participants often described this preparation as *adaptation*—perhaps understood as a drawn change in and of itself (*Figure 7*).

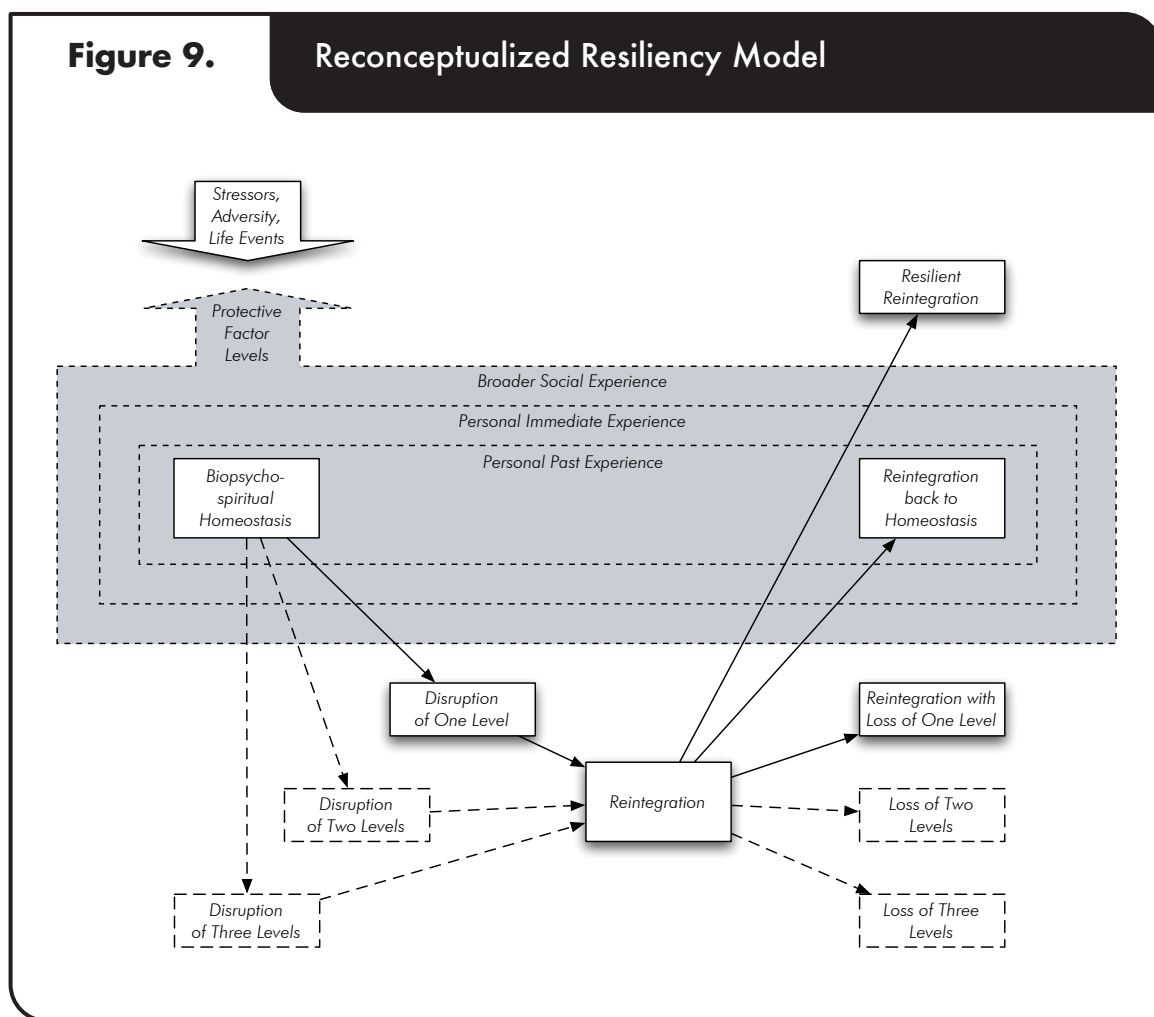
A Reconceptualized Resiliency Model

Before an adequate discussion of the remaining components (or stages) of Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson's (2002) Resiliency Model can be presented, a reconceptualization of that model must be made that accommodates the experiences of this study's participants. To initiate this reconceptualization, the researcher once again returns to the literature presented within Chapter Two. Specifically, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) argument that survival and endurance "under conditions of adversity" (p. 5) are functions of two traits: the personal traits, or protective factors, possessed by the individual, and the traits, or protective factors, of their community. If this statement is examined within the context of the experiences described by this study's participants, one can see that this appears to be an accurate account. As has been described in paragraphs earlier, however, the concept of personal protective factors is somewhat problematic since it in fact describes two separate and distinguishable

elements: personal past experience and Bronfenbrenner's (1980) macro- and meso-system levels—the individual's understanding of their immediate setting. For this reason, a primary reconceptualization is the division of Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson's (2002) protective factors into three interrelated protective areas of experience: personal past experience, personal immediate experience, and broader social experience (*Figure 8*).



With a separation of protective factors comes a clarification of Richardson et al. (1990) and Richardson's (2002) notion of *disruption*. Weaknesses in protective factors can be understood more accurately when viewed as weaknesses in particular or multiple protective areas of experience. For this reason, weakness of one protective area may be understood as less "unpleasant [or] agonizing" (Richardson et al., 1990, p. 36) and therefore the individual may regain their homeostasis more quickly, and perhaps with less noticeable effort. Should, however, an individual suffer weakness in more than one protective area, the process of reintegration is likely to be more difficult (Figure 9).



The experiences illustrated by the stories and memories of the participants in this study seemed to fit within this model. In all cases, their instinctive belief that the changes meant nothing to them were understood as evidence that their protective areas were strong. Their reintegration, in all of their minds, was resilient—at least they said so. Interestingly, each participant, though claiming that they were resilient, were not instinctively able to explain why. As the ultimate result of their dialectic dialogue, however, they believed it had something to do with their past experience; some even consciously detailed the notion that their immediate experience (at that time) was one of stability. Lev provided the key to an understanding of the social context of the changes they encountered, and how the meaning one made of their own personal place within this social context was ironically a dialectic discord between a thesis of fear and an optimistic antithesis. Oleksandr, Dmytro, Viktoriya and Lev seemed to agree that optimism prevailed. The mere existence of fear at the broader social experience denoted a weakness within the exo- and macro-system levels and explained why each participant ultimately revealed that some form of disruption was experienced.

The order in which the three protective areas were listed in a previous paragraph is significant. As illustrated within Figures 8 and 9, the innermost area—the area closest and most immediate to the biopsychospiritual homeostasis—is the *personal past experience*. No matter the setting in which an individual exists, they carry with them the experiences of their past. Encompassing the personal past experience area is the *personal immediate experience*. It is within this area that past experiences are employed to enable solid judgement and empower decision-making. When the immediate experience is stable, decisions and judgements to make are more clearly defined. Influencing decisions

within the immediate experience is the broader (uncontrollable) social experience. Having the protection of the two more direct and personal protective areas, as was the case for the participants within this study, weakness within the broader social experience area results in less “unpleasant [or] agonizing” (Richardson et al., 1990, p. 36) disruption of one’s homeostasis, and by extension, a less difficult positive reintegration.

Sztompka (1999) draws similar conclusions within the context of trust, suggesting that the levels of key importance for the development and strength of an individual’s trusting nature are those of the familial (or immediate) and experiential (or past). In fact, Sztompka draws the analogy of trust as a commodity or resource held by an individual.

The assets we possess serve as a kind of insurance of our trust, because they lower our relative (subjective) vulnerability in case trust is breached. Having large resources we have backup reserves, the potential losses mean less to us, and thus our relative (subjective) risk is lowered. (Sztompka, 1999, p. 127)

Perhaps a similar analogy may be drawn between the protective factors one holds, and Sztompka’s idea of *insurance*.

Reflections on the Participants’ Experience within Crisis

Earlier in this chapter a discussion of Conner’s (1993) notion of crisis was presented. Within that analysis, the premise was suggested that the experiences of the participants complemented Conner’s description of a crisis, and it is not the purpose of the present discussion to retract that claim. Rather, it must be further explained within the framework of the reconceptualized resiliency model.

A crisis is the point at which it becomes apparent that what we had planned is no longer feasible and our expectations are disrupted ... [I]f it is a significant departure from what we expected, a crisis ensues because ambiguity enters the situation. (Conner, 1993, p. 28)

The *ambiguity* and *departure from what we expect* in a situation may be experienced at different protective levels, as has been shown. In all participant accounts, ambiguity seemed to be experienced exclusively at the broader social protective level. The *protective area distance* between individual and crisis was great, however, and though the experiences at this level denote crisis, crisis, in this case, is not necessarily indicative of large-scale disruption.

A Question of Experiential Meaning Made by Participants

The research question at the heart of this document and study may now resurface for discussion.

- What meaning do students make of their experiences in school during and after the Soviet-era?

By retrospectively viewing their experiences through the lenses of change, success and resilience, one gains an appreciation of the depth, challenge and profundity of student lives. For these participants—these students—school-based experiences were an interplay of three primary levels of experience. All encounters, relationships, decisions, and exchanges were fundamentally based upon their past experiences, and the further meaning the participants made of these. For all participants, at various times in their

school lives, a collection of social values were explored through participation in sports, extra-curricular activities, and, most notably, classroom interaction and Soviet youth organizations. In their homes, similar social values appeared to be present and taught.

The setting of their school-based experience, the personal immediate level of experience, was their school. Within this setting, they relied upon their past experience to aid in their development of ideas, opinions, realizations, decisions and judgements about their setting. Similarly, their past and setting were used to develop such ideas about the third related level of their experience, their broader social experience.

The social experience, being the furthest from the students' locus of control, was one of ever-increasing complication and instability. Early within their schooling, state control over social experience was tight and heavily politicized. The state used this control to further its own agenda and grip on power. By injecting politicized content into school-based experience, the state attempted to influence, manipulate and mould the psyche of society from an early age. Political meetings and activities within the Oktyabryata, Pioneers and Komsomol are examples of this. Perhaps because of their age, in their early years none of the participants seemed interested in the tenets of the ideological ethos looming over their social experiences. What proved more meaningful were their experiences within the first two levels, or experiences within the social level that they could directly link to experiences therein—the values and message, to take Viktoriya's example. As the students grew, the strict indoctrination that had been heavily potent within the surrounding ether began to dissipate, largely due to the perestroika and glasnost' movements. Replacing the void were both a fear of a future unknown and, more intoxicating, a general optimism that opportunity was growing ever closer.

The bipolar social experience present at the advent of the coup and ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union was disruptive for the students, to be sure. But the more immediate protection surrounding them—their family values and the slow rate at which education systems and schools changed—coupled with the cult of optimism and opportunity that was gaining an ever more devoted popular following (especially within the ranks of the youth to middle-aged segments of the population, to use Viktoriya’s observation), provided a stability that ultimately facilitated their resilient integration into the post-Soviet era. The meaning the students made of their experience, therefore, was intricate, multi-layered, familial, social and personal.

Implications for Educational Leadership and Practice

Recall the statement from within Chapter One, *to define change is not a simple task*. The pages of discussion within this study support this statement. To understand the nature of change, and more specific to the interests of the researcher, the experiences of students within change, one must understand the levels at which they interact with the world around them. When disruption was minimized at the innermost levels of protection, it appeared that individual students were better able to recover their equilibrium. When disruption at the outer levels of protection could be minimized through the use of optimistic social confidence, so too did it appear that individual students more quickly recovered. The understanding of change to be culled from the lived experiences of this study’s participants, therefore, is that efforts to ensure optimism and stability at a number of key levels may empower students facing change, disruption

or crisis, and enable them regain their biopsychospiritual homeostasis, perhaps with a gain in resilience.

Furthermore, this study has shown administrators the importance of understanding the personal and immediate levels of experience held by students within their care. Primarily, knowledge of the instabilities and support mechanisms that exist within their lives provides a better picture of the *insurance of resilience* they hold. Second, understanding student experience permits administrators to comprehend contexts in which success and achievement exist by the student's own definition, as well as that imposed upon them.

Areas for Future Research

Out of this study come a number of areas that require deeper insight and research in the perpetual attempt to more fully understand the lived experience of a population. To be sure, there is abundant value in examining the experiences of other groups of students, colleagues of the participants in this study, who remained in their respective former Soviet republics. Do their experiences seem to coincide with those of this cohort? What about the *Alpha-Omega* experiences of students in other post-socialist or post-dictatorial states—in East Central and Eastern Europe, Africa, Central and South America and Asia—do similarities of experience exist? And what of the school-based experiences of adolescents in areas of the world war-torn, or witness to other catastrophic events which in their own way have propelled change? Is this reconceptualized resiliency model valid beyond the scope of this study's five participants? All of these questions, and questions like them, drive researchers toward the unending, yet abundantly

exciting goal of deeper understanding. Quite clearly, the world we as a species continue to develop for our children and ourselves must be appreciated for its depth and uniqueness, the rendering of which simply cannot be done justice through statistician's equation.

Postscript

In a number of ways I have reflected upon the past year and found similarities between the thoughts presented by this study's participants and my own. My own experiences within these past twelve months may be understood as change. In August 2002, I was married to my wife Jennifer, from whom I gained unconditional support and love, as well as the wisdom and perspective held within her own experience. So too did I gain these from her family—now mine. This collective support and protection touched my mother, my brother and me in very profound ways when we lost my father in May 2003. My past experience, including the encouragement and love of my father as I grew, became a piece of my own resilience through his debilitating sickness and ultimate death. For me, the support found in our family and friends solidified my knowledge that no matter the situation the love of family remains constant, providing stability within times of change.

In September 2002, I entered the College of Education and the Department of Educational Administration—an academic specialization different from my undergraduate experiences in Political Studies and International Studies. Upon completion of my undergraduate work, I felt disenchanted by its absence of human substance—a tangibility I have found within Educational Administration. Furthermore,

the support, encouragement and friendship I have encountered, as an *outsider* entering this new field of study, was, and remains, nothing short of overwhelming.

So, as this thesis found its conclusion, I was left reflecting upon the question arising from Lev's insightful commentary: Where does one's personal understanding of success sit, within achievement or experience? For me, the successes found within this year were those of experience, not achievement—a year of experience that has shown the importance of supportive family and school-based experience as the foundation upon which my own success rests.

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APPENDIX A:

Application for Approval of Research Protocol

Application for Approval of Research Protocol

Researcher's Summary

- 1) **Researchers:** David Burgess (researcher) and Dr. Patrick Renihan (department head); Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan.
- 1a) **Type of Study:** M. Ed. (Thesis).
- 1b) **Anticipated Dates of Study:** May 1, 2003 to July 30, 2003.
- 2) **Title of Study:** A Retrospective Study of Adolescent Student Resilience within Soviet and Post-Soviet Educational Change.
- 3) **Abstract:** This is a modified basic phenomenological study (Seidman, 1998) of adolescent student resilience in the face of a specific social and political change. It will provide a retrospective collection of student experiences in large-scale social and political change, and the students' interpretation of the impact of related crises upon their education. It will examine these students' responses to such change with regard to resilience and their success. In so doing, four points of focus will be examined. These include: What are student's memories of their place within the political and social change (perestroika and glasnost) and crisis (the coup and dissolution of the Soviet Union) experienced between 1986 and 1991? What meaning do students make of their place within this political and social change? What meaning do students make of their schools' place within the political and social change experienced between 1986 and 1991? What meaningful linkages exist for students between their experiences in school and the nature of their resiliency and success in the aftermath of such change and crisis?
- 4) **Funding:** This is an unfunded study.
- 5) **Participants:** All participants will be initially contacted through recruitment organizations when applicable, or by the researcher, department head or participants themselves should a recruitment agent not be involved. Primary recruitment will be done through community organizations (centres for English as a second language, open-door societies, churches and other similar agencies within Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary, etc.), personal acquaintances (academic colleagues, and former colleagues) and standard snowball methods wherein participants are asked for contact information of other possible and appropriate participants. Participants will be volunteers, both male and female, will have been between the ages of twelve and sixteen years in 1991 (currently between the ages of twenty-four and twenty-eight), and will have attended school within the Soviet education system (Russian SFSR, Ukrainian SSR, Byelorussian SSR, Uzbek SSR, Kazakh SSR, Georgian SSR, Azerbaijan SSR, Lithuanian SSR, Moldavian SSR, Latvian SSR, Kirghiz SSR, Tajik SSR, Armenian SSR, Turkmen

SSR, and Estonian SSR) both before and after that time. Age delimitations account for adolescence and school experience both prior to (during perestroika and glasnost) and after the political and social change of August-December 1991. Due to applicable regional linguistic deficiencies on the part of the researcher, all participants will speak English. Participants will be operationally divided into two groups, 1 and 2. *Group 1* will include participants who are currently living within reasonable proximity to Saskatoon (within Manitoba, Saskatchewan or Alberta) and will be participating in one-on-one interviews with the researcher. *Group 2* will include participants who are currently living outside of the area discussed above and will be participating through asynchronous interviews with the researcher via multiple electronic mail messages. Introductory letters will be sent to all participants in both *Groups 1* and *2* prior to interviews (*please refer to Appendices A and B*).

The researcher has a prior relationship with three expected participants: one is currently a M. Ed. student within the researcher's academic cohort; two are former colleagues of the researcher. The researcher neither currently holds nor previously held authority or expectations of authority over any of the said expected participants, therefore no dependant relationships exist (*please refer to paragraph 6d*).

- 5a) **Sample of Recruitment Material:** Pursuant to guidelines of the University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research, sample copies of recruitment material has not been provided as the researcher believes this study to be of minimal risk (*please refer to paragraph 10*).
- 6) **Consent:** Two forms of consent will be required for this study, depending on the nature of a participant's involvement (*please refer to paragraph 6a*). In all cases, participants will be asked to give their consent to provide information regarding their experiences within the Soviet and post-Soviet education systems, including their experiences with social and political change in the Soviet Union and their perceptions of their personal resilience and success during the period to be studied.
- 6a) **Signed Consent:** A letter of consent will be provided to each participant at the beginning of the study. The format of that letter will differ depending upon the nature of the interviews that will take place. In *Group 1*, the participant will indicate his or her willingness to participate through a signature (*please refer to Appendix C*). In *Group 2*, the participant will indicate his or her willingness to participate through a typed declaration sent from their personal electronic mail account to the researcher's personal electronic mail account (*please refer to Appendix D*). Both letters of consent will include the individual's right to withdraw from the study at any time and also ensure the right to confidentiality. To alleviate any concerns regarding the confidentiality of material transmitted via electronic mail, participants and researcher will use personal individual access electronic mail accounts, protected by username and password.

- 6b) **Permission from Outside Body:** Permission from any outside body is not viewed as necessary for participation within this study.
- 6c) **Assent:** Due to age delimitations of this study, all participants will be the age of majority according to applicable Canadian statutes.
- 6d) **Dependency Relationships:** No dependant relationships are foreseen to exist between the researcher and participants.
- 6e) **Inability to Provide Consent due to Impairments:** No impairments are foreseen that may inhibit participants' abilities to grant the researcher informed consent.
- 6f) **Naturalistic-Observation Consent:** Due to the retrospective nature of this study, participants will not be observed in any naturalistic setting. Therefore, naturalistic-observation consent is not required.
- 6g) **Pre-Established Participant Group:** No pre-established participant groups that may coerce participation are foreseen or known to exist.
- 7) **Methods:** Data will be collected in two ways. First, participants within *Group 1* will receive an introductory letter (*please refer to Appendix A*) and will be invited to participate in one-on-one interviews. Semi-structured interviews will consist of approximately 15 questions (*please refer to Appendix E*). A second interview may be requested of the participants (*please refer to paragraph 7, §3; and Appendix C*). These interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed at a later date. The researcher will use the actual quotes of the participants in *Group 1* in data analysis. Procedures to maintain confidentiality will be followed.

Some participants from *Group 1* will be invited to participate in a second interview, if applicable (i.e.: in cases where common themes appear to emerge from data collected). Questions will be constructed as a result of data collected within original interviews such that clarification may be made. Participation in a second interview remains voluntary. Participants in one-on-one interviews will not be required to participate in second interviews. Second interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed at a later date. The researcher will use the actual quotes of the participants in second interviews in data analysis. Procedures to maintain confidentiality will be followed. Participants will be reminded of confidentiality procedures discussed within the original consent form signed prior to one-on-one interviews.

Second, participants within *Group 2* will receive an introductory electronic mail message (*please refer to Appendix B*) and will be invited to participate in asynchronous interviews via an exchange of multiple electronic mail messages with the researcher. Similar to the procedure used with *Group 1*, semi-structured

interview techniques will be used. However, in the initial interview message sent by the researcher, three questions will be presented and participants will be invited to reply to the researcher with their answers and comments. From the answers and comments provided by participants, the researcher will construct further questions for each participant on an individual basis, based on those remaining from the list provided in Appendix E. Approximately five electronic mail messages containing questions from the researcher are expected. All communication involved in these asynchronous interviews will be stored electronically within the researcher's personal electronic mail account (protected by username and password on the University of Saskatchewan's electronic mail server duke.usask.ca, the integrity of which is monitored by Security Services and the Division of Information Technology Services). At the completion of the study, all electronic communication will be printed and paper copies will be stored pursuant to University Council directives (*please refer to paragraph 8*); all electronic copies will be destroyed immediately thereafter. The researcher will use the actual quotes of the participants in *Group 2* in data analysis. Procedures to maintain confidentiality will be followed.

- 8) **Storage of Data:** Pursuant to University Council directives of December 8, 1993, revised February 21, 1994, all data (field notes, transcripts, printed electronic mail messages, audio recordings and artefacts) will be securely stored and retained by the department head for a minimum of five years at the University of Saskatchewan. Access to stored material will not be granted to outside individuals.
- 9) **Dissemination of Results:** Results of this study will be presented to the College of Graduate Studies and Research of the University of Saskatchewan by the researcher in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Administration. Results may be published as an article in a scholarly journal or presented at a conference. In all cases, the identity of participants will be protected.
- 10) **Risk or Deception:** The risk involved in this study is minimal and there is no deception involved. Participation in this study is voluntary. There is one researcher who will be handling all information that is to be collected. The interviews involving *Group 1* will be audio-recorded and therefore will be performed in a closed environment to ensure confidentiality. The electronic mail messages used during asynchronous interviews with *Group 2* will be sent from and received by personal password protected electronic mail accounts, and data collected by the researcher will be stored on a protected University of Saskatchewan server for no longer than the study period (*please refer to paragraph 7, §2*).
- 10a) **Vulnerable Populations:** The population to be studied is not seen as vulnerable.

- 10b) Captive or Dependent Populations:** The population to be studied is not seen as captive or dependent.
- 10c) Institutional or Power Relationships:** The population to be studied is not seen as involved in an institutional or power relationship with the researcher (*please refer to paragraphs 5, §2 and 6d*).
- 10d) Association of Participants to Data File:** In all cases, the identity of participants will be protected.
- 10e) Loss of Confidentiality or Anonymity:** Procedures to maintain confidentiality will be followed (*please refer to paragraphs 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11*).
- 10f) Audio- or Video-tape:** Audio-tapes will be used (*please refer to paragraph 8*).
- 10g) Deception:** Participants will not be deceived or misled. Information regarding the nature of this study is presented to the participants in an introductory letter from the researcher prior to requests for consent (*please refer to paragraphs 7, §1 and §2, and Appendices A and B*).
- 10h) Discomfort:** The research methods employed by this study are not foreseen to cause any degree of discomfort, fatigue or stress.
- 10i) Personal and Sensitive Questions:** The researcher does not believe the nature of any questions to be asked will upset the participants. Similarly, participants are reminded that they are in no way obligated to answer all questions presented (*please refer to Appendices C and D*).
- 10j) Embarrassment or Humiliation:** The researcher does not believe the nature of any questions to be asked will induce embarrassment, humiliation, lowered self-esteem, guilt, conflict, anger, distress, or any other negative emotional state. Similarly, participants are reminded that they are in no way obligated to answer all questions presented (*please refer to Appendices C and D*).
- 10k) Social Risk:** The research does not believe participation within this study will involve a participant's loss of status, privacy or reputation.
- 10l) Infringing on Rights of Participants:** The researcher will not restrict participants from any third party activities as a requirement of participation within this study.
- 10m) Compensation:** Participation within this study is completely voluntary. Compensation for participation will be minimal (for example: a cup of coffee, a container of juice, a bottle of pop).

10n) Predictable Harm: No predictable harm will be experienced as a result of participation within this study.

11) Confidentiality: Confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study by using pseudonyms for the real names of the participants on tapes, transcripts analysis and any written summaries that result from this study other than the consent related material. Participants will not be made aware of the identities of other participants, subject to the limitations of the snowball recruitment method (*please refer to Appendices A and C*).

Any reference to schools, other students, or any other identifiable remarks will be carefully examined and changed as needed to facilitate confidentiality. All participants will be given pseudonyms and will not be identifiable in any way by former classmates, teachers or educational administrators or government officials. All precautions will be taken to ensure confidentiality of the participants. All data from interviews, electronic mail messages, or focus groups will be labelled with pseudonyms and stored in separate sealed envelopes.

12) Data/Transcript Release: Each participant will be given the opportunity to review the abridged transcripts of their interview audio-recordings or electronic mail messages. Upon completion of review, each participant will be asked to sign, for *Group 1* (*please refer to Appendix F*), or type a declaration, for *Group 2* (*please refer to Appendix G*), that they agree with what they said in the transcript or what they intended to say. Participants have the right, upon reviewing the transcript, to withdraw, change or add to any or all of their responses.

13) Debriefing and Feedback: Upon request, the participants will be provided with an executive summary of the study following its completion.

14) Required Signatures:

Researcher: _____

Supervisor: _____

Department Head: _____

Date: _____

15) Contact Information:

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APPENDIX B:

Introductory Letter to Interview Participants

Introductory Letter to Interview Participants

A Retrospective Study of Adolescent Student Resilience within Soviet and Post-Soviet Educational Change

Hello,

My name is Dave Burgess. I am currently working toward a Master's Degree in Educational Administration. My particular interests are in the area of education within social and political change and the effects this type of change has on students and their ability to succeed in life.

I am conducting a study that will examine the effects of the change that took place in the Soviet Union between 1986 and 1992. Specifically, I am interested in talking to people who are between the ages of twenty-four and twenty-eight years old, and who were students in the Soviet and post-Soviet education systems between 1986 and 1992. No specific experience in school is required to participate; just the fact that you were a student at the time is enough.

I will be conducting one-on-one confidential interviews, and I am looking for former Soviet students who may be willing to discuss with me their experiences for about forty-five minutes. This research has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Sciences Research on April 28, 2003.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and if you participate in an interview I will strive to protect your confidentiality.

If you are interested in participating and meet all of the criteria outlined above, I would be very pleased to organize a time to sit down with you and chat. Please send me a quick email at dave.burgess@usask.ca or give me a call at (306) 249-4150. If you have any questions, please feel free to send me email or call me, as well; or you may contact my department head, Dr. Patrick Renihan, Head of the Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan, in Saskatoon at (306) 966-7619.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Best Regards,

Dave Burgess

APPENDIX C:

Letter of Consent for Interview Participants

Letter of Consent for Interview Participants

Dear _____,

I very much appreciate your participation in the study, *A Retrospective Study of Adolescent Student Resilience within Soviet and Post-Soviet Educational Change*. This study will retrospectively explore the insights, opinions and memories of adolescent students within the Soviet education system during the changes of perestroika, glasnost and the collapse of the Soviet Union. To achieve this goal, I will adhere to the following guidelines designed to protect the interests of everyone taking part:

1. I will interview you to discuss your memories and insights related to school in the Soviet Union, the social and political change that took place, and your understanding of how your school experience affected your success after the change. I do not envision any risks to you as a result of participating in this study.
2. You will be initially interviewed once one-on-one (for roughly a hour). The interview will be audio-recorded and you will be free to turn off the tape recorder at any time during the interview. If you are willing to participate in a second interview (likely within a group setting with other participants sharing similar experiences to your own), this will also be audio-recorded and you will again be free to control the tape recorder. You are in no way obligated to participate in the second (group) interview.
3. Each audio recording will be transcribed and analysed to discover major themes that were discussed. You will be presented with a “smoothed narrative” version of the transcript—where false starts, repetitions, and paralinguistic utterances are removed to improve readability. You will be asked to check the transcription to clarify and add information, so as to construct the meanings and interpretations that become “data” for later interpretation by myself as researcher. You may delete anything you do not wish to be quoted within the study.
4. Participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from this study at any time without fear of penalty or reprisal by the University of Saskatchewan. If you choose to withdraw, the audio recordings, transcripts and interview data will be destroyed.
5. Audio recordings and the results of this study will be securely stored with Dr. Patrick Renihan, Head of the Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, and retained for a minimum of five years in accordance with University Council guidelines.
6. The results of the study will be disseminated in the form of a Master’s Thesis and may be published as an article in a scholarly journal or presented at a conference. Your confidentiality will be protected through the use of pseudonyms, however, if you choose to participate in a second (group) interview you understand that confidentiality may not be fully protected and cannot be promised as the researcher holds no authority over you or your fellow participants. If you do participate in a second (group) interview, you agree, however, to protect the confidentiality of fellow participants.

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board approved this research on ethical grounds on April 28, 2003. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Office of Research Services at (306) 966-2084 (collect calls accepted), myself at (306) 249-4150 or dave.burgess@usask.ca, or my department head, Dr. Patrick Renihan, Head of the Department of Educational Administration, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, at (306) 966-7619 or pat.renihan@usask.ca.

I, _____, understand the guidelines above, agree to participate in this study and have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Participant's signature:

Researcher's signature:

Dave Burgess

Date:

APPENDIX D:

Semi-Structured Interview Question Guide

Semi-Structured Interview Question Guide

Thematic Question:

What do students make of their experiences in school during perestroika?

1. Can you tell me about your life in school during the time of perestroika?
2. Can you tell me a story about when you were successful in school at this time?
3. What did it mean to be successful in school?
4. Can you tell me about a time when you were not successful in school?
5. What did you learn from this experience?
6. Can you tell me about a time when you needed support or help from someone at the school?

Thematic Question:

What do students make of their experiences in school after perestroika?

1. Can you tell me about your life in school after perestroika?
2. What was your experience with success in school after perestroika?
3. What about an experience of not being successful?
4. Can you tell me about a time when you needed support or help from someone at the school?

Thematic Question:

How did school change?

1. Can you share a story about how school changed or didn't change during perestroika and glasnost?
2. How was it different or the same?
3. Can you tell me a story about how your teachers and school reacted to the perestroika and glasnost movement?
4. Did your support mechanisms in school change?

Thematic Question:

Were the students resilient?

1. Can you tell me a story about how the change affected you personally?
2. How has your life changed?
3. Would you say that your school helped you to deal with the change?
4. What would you change about your experience in school if you had the power to do so?
5. How do you measure your success now? Are you a successful and resilient person?

APPENDIX E:

Data/Transcript Release Form for Interview Participants

Data/Transcript Release Form for Interview Participants

Dear _____,

I very much appreciate your participation in the study, *A Retrospective Study of Adolescent Student Resilience within Soviet and Post-Soviet Educational Change*. Please fill your name below, read the paragraphs that follow and if you are comfortable that the transcript accurately reflects your words please sign where indicated.

I, _____, have reviewed the completed transcript of my personal interview and any focus groups with which I may have been apart during this study, and acknowledge that the transcripts accurately reflect what I said in my interview(s) with Dave Burgess.

I authorize the researcher to use any artefacts that I have provided for this study.

I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to Dave Burgess and/or Dr. Patrick Renihan to be used in the manner described in the letter of consent.

I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Participant's signature:

Researcher's signature:

Dave Burgess

Date:

Thank you for your participation in this study. Your contributions are greatly appreciated.

APPENDIX F:

Letter of Behavioural Research Ethics Board Approval



**UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS BOARD**

<http://www.usask.ca/research/ethics.shtml>

NAME: Patrick Renihan (D. Burgess)
Department of Educational Administration

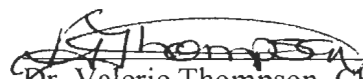
BSC#: 03-941

DATE: May 26, 2003

The Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the revisions to the Application for Ethics Approval for your study "A Retrospective study of Adolescent Student Resilience Within Soviet and Post-Soviet Educational Change" (03-941).

1. Your study has been APPROVED.
2. Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Committee consideration in advance of its implementation.
3. The term of this approval is for 5 years.
4. This approval is valid for five years on the condition that a status report form is submitted annually to the Chair of the Committee. This certificate will automatically be invalidated if a status report form is not received within one month of the anniversary date. Please refer to the website for further instructions: <http://www.usask.ca/research/behavrsc.shtml>

I wish you a successful and informative study.


Dr. Valerie Thompson, Chair
University of Saskatchewan
Behavioural Research Ethics Board

VT/ck

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